HERMETICA

The Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Latin *Asclepius*
in a new English translation with notes and introduction

BRIAN P. COPENHAVER

The *Hermetica* are a body of theological-philosophical texts written in late antiquity, but believed during the Renaissance (when they became well known) to be much older. Their supposed author, a mythical figure called Hermes Trismegistus, was thought to be a contemporary of Moses. The Hermetic philosophy was regarded as an ancient theology, parallel to the revealed wisdom of the Bible, supporting biblical revelation and culminating in the philosophy of Plato, Plotinus and others in the Platonic tradition. This new translation is the only English version based on reliable texts of the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Latin *Asclepius*. Professor Copen- haver's introduction and notes provide a context of interpretation taking into account recent advances in Hermetic scholarship, making this accessible edition an indispensable resource to scholars in ancient philosophy and religion, early Christianity, Renaissance literature and history, the history of science, and the occultist tradition in which the *Hermetica* have become canonical texts.

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Many bear the wand, but few become Bakchoi:

Frances Amelia Yates, 1899–1981
Daniel Pickering Walker, 1914–85
Charles Bernard Schmitt, 1933–86

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PREFACE

For reasons explained at the end of the introduction, I began this book about ten years ago; I continued it because a number of friends and colleagues encouraged me to think that it would be useful. My first debt is to the late Charles Schmitt, who saw parts of the work in its earliest form and first put me in touch with Cambridge University Press. Others who have read the typescript in whole or in part – Michael Allen, Tony Grafton, Brian Murphy, Doug Parrott – have given me important advice and criticism for which I am most grateful. Librarians and other staff at Oakland University and the University of California, Riverside, have also been most helpful. Though I do not know the names of the three generous and perceptive readers who examined and corrected the typescript, I wish at least to thank their nameless *genii* for rescuing me from ignorance or imprudence in more cases than I can comfortably contemplate. My more public thanks go to Kevin Taylor and Jonathan Sinclair- Wilson, who handled the project for Cambridge with patience and skill. Patience, long-suffering patience, has also been the chief virtue of my wife, Kathleen, and my children, Gregory and Rebecca, while I was lost in the temples of Hermes. My son, in particular, may at last be convinced, when he sees the book in print, that it was others and not I who invented the myth of Hermes Trismegistus.

Riverside, California
Die festo Sancti Valentini, 1991

INTRODUCTION

Hor and Manetho

A few miles west of the Nile and just below the tip of its delta lies the modern Sakkara, site of the necropolis of ancient Memphis, center of Lower Egypt from the days of the pharaohs through the time of Egypt's Roman conquerors. The sacred ibis, the graceful black and white bird in which the god Thoth showed himself, no longer visits the Nile at Memphis, but when the Ptolemies and their Roman successors drank from the holy river, the god's bird still came to its banks in great plenty. So huge were its flocks that those who wished to honor Thoth with mummies of his bird were able to prepare thousands of such offerings every year, thus proving their piety in a cult of the ibis, just as devotees of Osiris-Apis or Sarapis worshipped their god in the bull cult of the great Serapeion, the temple that dominated the landscape of Ptolemaic Memphis. Many gods dwelled in the precincts of the Serapeion: Isis of the hundred names, whose worship had already begun to spread from Egypt through the Mediterranean basin; Imhotep or Imouthes, a god of healing whom the Greeks called *Asklēpios;* and Thoth, god of the moon and messages and writing, *Hermēs* to the Greeks, and like Hermes the guide of dead souls.[1] In Sakkara, north of the Serapeion proper, archeologists have uncovered structures built for Thoth's ibis, a lunar bird of the night, and also for the hawk of Horus, a solar daytime bird. In these buildings attendants of the sacred birds hatched, reared, venerated and eventually mummified them for burial in urns. The number of birds buried in the galleries of "the house of rest of the ibis" has been reckoned at four million or more, implying that perhaps ten thousand dead ibises were stacked in these corridors in each year of the four centuries when the Sakkara complex was active.

Shortly before the year 200 BCE, late in the reign of the fourth Ptolemy, called Philopator, began three decades and more of disorder in the ibis cult. Around the same time, in the district of Sebennytos north of Memphis, in the

Damietta branch of the delta, a man named for the hawk god, Hor or Horus, was born. Hor's birthplace was probably called Pi-Thoth, *Hermopolis* in Greek, but this delta town was not the great Hermopolis that lay far to the south at modern Ashmounein, where Lower and Upper Egypt meet. For some years, well into the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor, Hor of Sebennytos stayed near home in Temenesi, the city of Isis, as a servant of that mighty goddess, but eventually, at some unknown date, he went south to Memphis and the ibis shrine in Sakkara. By 166 Hor's dreams had told him to follow Thoth and no other, perhaps as *katachos* or "recluse," a cloistered servant of the god. Earlier, while still in Isiospolis, he had stirred Thoth's anger by some unnamed complicity in a scandal involving the feeding of the ibises, but then, beginning in 174, reforms in Sakkara ended the long misuse of the sacred birds, which may have included fraudulent delivery of empty burial jars to those who had paid for their mummified contents. Hor dictated, or in some cases wrote, the Demotic ostraca or inscribed potsherds that record this reform. One of them contains the minutes of a meeting of the council of the ibis cult held on June 1, 172; this session related the history of the cult's decay and decided to arrest six "servants of the ibises" and jail them in stocks. The ostracon opens with this warning:

> From the scribe of the nome of Sebennytos, Hor, son of Harendjiotef. No man shall be able to lapse from a matter which concerns Thoth, the god in person who holds sway in the temple in Memphis, and likewise Harthoth within it. The benefit which is performed for the ibis, the soul of Thoth, *the three times great*, is made for the hawk also, the soul of Ptah …, the soul of Horus.[2]

Hor's title for Thoth is the Demotic equivalent of *megistou kai megistou theou megalou Hermou*, the Greek that he scratched on another ostracon – two superlative forms of "great" followed by a positive form of the same word – and this phrase is the earliest surviving instance, whether in Egyptian or in Greek, of the triple form of the god's title.[3] Thus, Hor's words foreshadow the later Greek title *Trismegistos*, the name given to Hermes as author of the treatises translated here, the name that would signify a new way of sanctifying the heathen past for Christian scholars of the Renaissance, a name that still charms the learned in our own time.

Manetho was another native of Sebynnetos. In a letter from a much later time but attributed to Manetho by the Byzantine George Syncellus and addressed to Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282–229), the Egyptian introduced his *Book of Sothis* and identified himself as "high priest and scribe of the sacred

shrines of Egypt … dwelling at Heliopolis," the city of Re. Of several works attributed to Manetho, the most important authentic survivals come from his *Aegyptiaca* or *History of Egypt*, written in Greek to impress the Hellenic world with the antiquity and authority of Egyptian culture. But Greco-Roman authors took little note of Manetho's annals, which are now preserved in excerpts and epitomes by Josephus and various Christian chronographers. Even before later Christian scholars made use of Manetho's history, it had been reworked, excised and otherwise distorted, so that by the time the universal chronicler Syncellus adapted it to his own purposes in the early ninth century, Manetho's work had already been through a complex process of selection and redaction. Although the remains of the *Aegyptiaca* are not reliable history, they impressed Josephus, Eusebius, Julius Africanus and other ancient students of the deeper past because they provided at least a skeleton of data on the passage of Egypt's dynasties over the millennia. Manetho wrote that his duties as priest and scribe gave him access to archival documents; whatever the truth of his claim, his work became authoritative for ancient and medieval users. Introducing the pseudonymous letter to Ptolemy, the monk Syncellus says that Manetho knew

> stelae in the land of Seiria … inscribed in the sacred tongue in hieroglyphic letters by Thoth, the first Hermes, and translated after the flood from the sacred tongue into the Greek language … and set down in books by the son of Agathodaimon, the second Hermes, father of Tat, in the sanctuaries of the temples of Egypt; [Manetho] dedicated [them] to … Ptolemy … , writing thus: . since you seek to know what will come to be in the cosmos, I shall present to you the sacred books that I have learned about, written by your ancestor, Hermes Trismegistus… This is what he says about the translation of the books written by the second Hermes.[4]

Thus, according to the records of a Byzantine monk, reading what he took to be reports made a thousand years earlier by an Egyptian priest, there were two gods named Hermes. The first was Thoth, who originally carved the sacred writings on stelae in hieroglyphics. The second Hermes, named Trismegistus, was the son of Agathodaimon and the father of Tat; after the flood he transferred the carvings to books, which came to be translated from Egyptian to Greek.[5] Although the last Ptolemy, Cleopatra VII, was the first of her line who spoke Egyptian, her predecessor would surely have been pleased if indeed Manetho assured him that Greeks had access to revered deposits of ancient native wisdom. The mention of the flood by Syncellus was the sort of clue that would eventually permit Christians to fit the Hermetic ancient theology into their own doxographies and genealogies.

Writing his long treatise on the *Mysteries of Egypt* around 300 CE, the Neoplatonist Iamblichus noted that

> the opinions found in the writings of the ancient scribes are many and diverse, as also those of the wise still living… . [From] classifications differing from one to the other among the priests of old, Hermes has put everything together in his twenty thousand books (as Seleucus listed them) or thirty-six thousand five hundred and fifty-five (as Manetho tells it).[6]

The numbers of actual survivals from the earliest Hermetic literature, some conceivably as early as the fourth century BCE, are less imposing, something more than two dozen known titles of Greek works attributed to, or otherwise involving, one or more of the same Hermetic cast (Hermes Trismegistus, Agathodaimon, Asclepius, Ammon, Tat) that appears in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, but dealing with a different subject matter – astrology, alchemy, magic and other beliefs and practices called "occult" in modern English speech.[7]

The world of the *Hermetica*

It was in ancient Egypt that the *Hermetica* emerged, evolved and reached the state now visible in the individual treatises. But this was not the Egypt of the pharaohs. Nectanebo II, the last pharaoh of the last dynasty, had already fled the Persian armies of Artaxerxes III when Alexander came to Egypt in 332 to found a city in his own name west of the Nile's Canopic mouth. Greeks had been active in Egypt since the time of Psammetichus I, who permitted the Milesians to plant a delta colony called Naucratis in the seventh century. When Alexander went to consult Amon's oracle at the Libyan oasis of Siwa, far to the west of Memphis, the attendant priest assured him that he was the god's son. An even more ambitious Egyptian story claimed a romance between Olympias (Alexander's mother) and Nectanebo himself. Ptolemy, one of Alexander's generals, took control of Egypt in 323 when his master died, styling himself Ptolemy Soter (Savior) in 305. Twenty monarchs of his dynasty followed him over the next three centuries, until Cleopatra VII killed herself in 30 BCE. All his ruling male heirs were called Ptolemy, but the family also produced six queens named Cleopatra or Berenike. Once he took power in Egypt, Ptolemy I joined the long conflict to divide Alexander's

empire. Egypt went to war five times with the Seleucids of western Asia before the end of the third century. By the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, who died of poisoning in 180, the reach of Egypt's external ambitions had shrunk to the island of Cyprus and the territory of Cyrene in North Africa.[8]

Egypt saw greater danger in 170 when Antiochus IV Epiphanes invaded, but in 168 Rome stopped the Seleucid king with an astounding gesture – Polybius called it "peremptory and exceedingly arrogant." The historian tells us that when the Senate's ambassador found Antiochus, he took a stick, drew a circle round the great king and commanded him to decide to leave Egypt before crossing the line. Antiochus, having lived in Rome and gauged her might, complied. His exit verified a dream "of the safety of Alexandria and the journeyings of Antiochus" that Hor of Sebennytos reported in that same year. As early as 273, Ptolemy II Philadelphus had already seen the point of good relations with Rome, and by the close of the third century the Romans were trading with Egypt and aiding her politically. After the dramatic intervention of 168, Rome had more power than the Ptolemies in their own land but saw no need to exercise it in this period of Egypt's political dormancy. Only when struggles of the first century in the West hastened the end of the Republic did Egypt again make serious trouble for Rome. Sulla installed the Ptolemy of his choice in 80, and in 49 Pompey became guardian of Ptolemy XIII, while his sister, Cleopatra VII, was dethroned. After Julius Caesar defeated Pompey at Pharsalus in 48, the victor went to Egypt. Finding his rival murdered by Egyptians, Caesar restored Cleopatra and spent two months with her; she thought well enough of the great commander to name her baby Ptolemy Caesarion. Six years later began the queen's long liaison with another threat to the Julian family, Mark Antony, who fathered three of her children. Antony's Egyptian escapades made it easy for Octavian to smear him for debauchery in the decadent Orient, and in 31 Octavian's navy won at Actium, leading to the capture of Alexandria and the suicides of Antony and Cleopatra.[9]

Octavian became Augustus in 27 BCE, but he dated Egypt's official absorption into his empire from the year 30. For the next three centuries, Egypt's fortunes rose and fell with the rhythms of the Pax Romana. Remembering her part in the civil wars before his principate, the first emperor applied special administrative and military policies to keep Egypt on a tighter leash than other provinces. Although Rome suppressed and divided Egypt's political energies to make her a safe granary for the empire,

the wealth and location of this richest of provinces always presented some level of risk. Nearby was rebellious Judea, where Nero sent Vespasian in 67 CE, before Vespasian emerged triumphant from the civil wars of 69; it was the Alexandrians who first named him emperor. Destruction came to the Alexandrian Jews in the revolt of 115–17, when news of a Messiah from Cyrene incited rebellion in the city and brought harsh reprisals from Rome. For the most part, however, imperial relations with Egypt were smoother. When Hadrian brought his lover Antinous to the Nile in 130–1, their idyll was shattered only by the young man's drowning, which moved the emperor to found the new city of Antinoopolis and to Egyptianize the decoration of his remarkable villa near Tivoli. Caracalla's trip in 215 was the most brutal of the imperial visitations. Alexandrian disloyalty fired his wrath, provoking him to harsh measures of massacre and exile in the city. By the late third century, Roman control in Egypt had weakened as Sassanian power threatened from Persia, tempting the Syrian rulers of Palmyra to move on Egypt and causing Aurelian to destroy their city in 273. Rebellions in the 290s required Diocletian to besiege Alexandria itself in 298, and in 302 he returned to the city – the last emperor to visit Egypt – before persecution of Christians began at Nicomedia in 303.[10]

Persecutions stopped with an edict of Galerius in 311, but he died soon after, and repression resumed briefly, until it ended for good after Constantine defeated Maxentius in 312. The new imperial religious policy, the foundation of Constantinople in 330 and other administrative measures ended the Roman era of Egypt's history and began her Byzantine period. Her future now looked to the East again, toward the new Rome, and her culture acquired a deeply Christian character. Paganism did not simply vanish, least of all among the more Hellenized Egyptians, but some scholars believe that most of the population became Christian before the end of the fourth century. Egyptian Christianity was a power in the world of late antiquity and the early middle ages, producing the social novelties of desert monasticism and the intellectual innovations of Alexandrian theology. In Egypt itself, Christianity was as mighty a force in secular affairs as in spiritual, and at its center stood the patriarch of Alexandria. Doctrinal controversies culminated in the Council of Chalcedon in 451, after which the Coptic church in Egypt stood for a Monophysite Christology while another line of patriarchs supported the contrary views approved at Chalcedon. The old enemy from Persia grew daring enough by 618 to capture Alexandria, retreating a decade later, but

this was the final pause before Christian Egypt's catastrophe in 642, when the last troops of Byzantium abandoned the country to the new armies of Islam.[11]

Continuities of culture and politics unify the nearly ten centuries between Alexander's arrival and the departure of the Byzantines, but the Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine lords of Egypt each had their different ways of governing. The Ptolemies were regional but alien monarchs, who ruled through a small group of equally foreign officials, dividing the country into districts called nomes (*nomoi* in Greek) and constructing an administration that forced some degree of Hellenization – especially in language – on any Egyptian whooshed to cope with the new rulers. As the power of the Ptolemies declined, distinctions between Greeks and Egyptians may have blurred a little, only to be sharpened and hardened by the more efficient Romans, who managed Egypt for the benefit of their empire. Rome kept the Ptolemaic nomes but deprived the district heads (*stratēgoi*) of military command and made them subordinate to a prefect appointed by the emperor. The Roman administration in Egypt was an unarmed civil service responsible solely to the emperor, who also controlled the separate military establishment. Unlike the Ptolemies, the Romans eventually allowed city councils and other institutions of Hellenic local government to develop in the towns, though they long forbade the honor of a *boulē* to the restive Alexandrians. The Byzantine emperors were less concerned than the Romans to distinguish Egypt from other provinces by direct imperial control, and they also reformed the bureaucracy, though without due regard for the growing influence of the Christian church on secular affairs.[12]

Egypt's primary value to Roman and Byzantine emperors was economic. The Nile valley supplied as much as. a third of Rome's grain, and Egypt was also a rich producer of grapes, olives, dates and other foods. Irrigation and other aids to agriculture improved under the Ptolemies, and the economy of Roman times would not be equalled in strength or complexity until the modern era. Under the Romans the population reached its peak in antiquity, numbering as many as eight million. Alexandria was the largest city by far, growing to perhaps half a million during the reign of Augustus; several dozen towns were a tenth the size or less, and hundreds of villages were much smaller. Centers like Oxyrhyncus or Hermopolis housed up to thirty thousand people. Alexandria and three other cities had special political status: Naucratis, Ptolemais and Antinoopolis. Residents of these cities were especially proud of their Hellenic constitutions, but Hellenism was the

dominant cultural mode everywhere in Egypt except the countryside, as one can see from the Hellenization of language and literature.[13] Records written in Egyptian Demotic script are plentiful through early Roman times, rarer after the first century CE. No hieroglyphic inscription can be dated later than the end of the fourth century CE. Coptic emerged in the third century when the church found it still necessary to use an Egyptian dialect but wanted it written in modified Greek letters. Latin never had wide application outside the army and government. The many papyri that survive from Hellenistic times and later suggest that Greeks and Hellenizing Egyptians had access to the whole scope of Greek literature. Greek culture was rich enough in Roman Egypt to produce a scholar as learned as Athenaeus, a philosopher as profound as Plotinus and a theologian as subtle as Origen. Native Egyptian letters were still lively under the Ptolemies but soon took on Greek coloration. Roman xenophobia found a good target for its anxieties in Egypt, which became proverbial in Latin writing for opulence and degeneracy. Juvenal's abuse of Egyptian village religion in his fifteenth *Satire* is the most celebrated example of this aspect of Roman racism:

> who does not know what monsters lunatic Egypt
> Chooses to cherish? One part goes in for crocodile worship;
> One bows down to the ibis that feeds upon serpents; elsewhere
> A golden effigy shines, of a long-tailed holy monkey!

No respect from the Tiber for the Nile's holy bird, sacred to Thoth.[14]

Greeks first came to Egypt in large numbers with the Ptolemies, and the new lords of the land also welcomed the Jews, who had come back to Egypt as early as the sixth century. The prospects of Alexandria attracted some; others fled such perils as the Maccabean revolt in Judea. The Romans protected the Jews in the practice of their religion and granted them other privileges resented by Egyptians, especially in Alexandria. Romans applied the term "Egyptian" to everyone living in Egypt who was neither a Roman citizen nor an urban Greek or Jew – by Roman standards. Until the extension of Roman citizenship in 212 CE, various legal, social and economic benefits attended these categories and aggrieved the native population, many of whom, especially in the cities, prided themselves on their Greek heritage. The Roman administration enforced the odious distinctions, wishing to keep Egypt plump and paralyzed by making its people socially immobile and politically disorganized. Army veterans who were not Roman citizens could

become so upon discharge, but the rules barred Egyptians from the military careers that opened this door. If a veteran cashed in his savings to buy land in a village, Egyptians could only despise his good luck and begrudge his immunity from taxation. Everyone wanted to be Roman or Greek in some sense, but the Romans scornfully treated everyone but themselves as subject to "Egyptian law" – whatever law was not Roman, in other words. They considered no one Greek who could not prove Greek parentage on both sides. The key to all prestige was Hellenism, to all power Roman citizenship, so it was natural that those who could claim any Greek identity or Roman rights would parade their status and annoy their neighbors. Romans mocked Egyptians for their incestuous marriages, without understanding how endogamy protected people from the risks of marrying outside the charmed circle of Hellenic birth and Roman nationality.[15]

Literary signs of Egyptian nativism emerged in the mid-third century BCE with the *Demotic Chronicle*, which tells nostalgic stories of better days when the pharaohs ruled. The *Potter's Oracle* also claimed a setting in pharaonic times, but it appeared in the late second century and again in the Roman period to make a darker apocalyptic promise: Alexandria, city of the hated aliens, will fall; ancient Memphis will be restored. The *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs* voiced a different complaint, not so much Egyptian as Hellenic and anti-Roman. The heroes of the Acts were Alexandrians, proud of their city, hostile to Jews and ready to confront the Roman emperor himself to insist on their rights as Hellenes. Through the first century CE, the Alexandrians who wanted to be Greek spent their rage mainly on the Jews, erupting in pogroms first in 38 and twice thereafter. But after Rome annihilated Alexandria's Jews in 115–17, the city turned its hatred toward the center of empire and kept it directed there through the next century – lending support to enemies of the emperor, proclaiming new pharaohs, gathering for public protests, starting riots and otherwise threatening the Roman order, and inviting the sort of revenge that Caracalla wreaked upon the city in 215.[16]

Greek and Roman imperialism naturally left its traces on religion, but – with the important exception of the Jewish persecutions – Egypt usually accommodated the beliefs of her alien residents, who in turn adapted their own to the Egyptian milieu. The following inscription from 238 BCE shows how Egyptians responded to the new realities while keeping their customs intact:

Since King Ptolemy … and Queen Berenike his sister and wife, the Benefactor Gods, constantly confer many great benefactions on the temples … and show constant care for Apis and Mnevis and all the other famous sacred animals … at great expense and outlay … be it resolved by the priests … to increase the honours … for King Ptolemy and Queen Berenike … and to their parents the Brother-sister Gods and to their grandparents the Saviour Gods, and be it resolved that the priests in all the temples … should also be called priests of the Benefactor Gods.

Throughout the post-pharaonic period, large temples continued to be built in the traditional style, decorated with images of Greek or Roman rulers whose appearance is entirely Egyptian and whose identity can be told only from the royal cartouche, the last example of which belonged to the Emperor Decius of the mid-third century. The survival of Egyptian religious forms is all the more impressive because they were so strange and (sometimes) repellent to others. Priesthood was a temporary civic function in the Hellenic world, but in Egypt priests formed a distinct hereditary group marked off from society by dress, behavior and occupation. Even odder were the many Egyptian gods, with bodies in human shape and heads of animals – inverted centaurs and satyrs.[17]

Greeks and Romans responded by finding Hellenic matches for the Egyptian deities – Thoth and Hermes, Imhotep and Asclepius, Zeus and Amon, and so on – but the resulting combinations were more complex and mobile than a few simple pairings can suggest. Sometimes an Egyptian god appealed to foreigners with little adaptation; even in Rome when a patriot called for the demolition of the temple of Isis in 50 BCE, no workers could be found bold enough for the job. And sometimes syncretism was a political tool for the aliens, the most famous instance being the cult of Sarapis manufactured under Ptolemy I. Given the association of Osiris with death and rebirth, it was natural to suppose that the dying bull of Apis became Osiris, yielding the amalgamated Osarapis or Sarapis. Sculptors depicted Sarapis with the head of Zeus, which expressed Ptolemy's wish to show Egyptians how their beliefs could blend with the Greek. If the popularity of Sarapis is any sign, Ptolemy's new god struck the right chord. Emperor worship was another foreign religious custom as intelligible to the Egyptians as it was expedient for the Romans. More often than not, the religious usages of Egypt, Rome and Greece flowed easily into each other.[18]

Like Judaism, Christianity made exclusive claims on religious loyalty and thus became more truculent, but not at first in Egypt. Since the first Christians were Judeans, their gospel arrived quickly in the neighboring Nile region,

where the large Jewish population of Alexandria could easily understand, and sometimes accept, the claims of the new covenant. Alexandrian Jews had been well prepared by the Septuagint, a Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, to read the Gospels and Epistles in Greek. Since Egyptians knew the resurrection myth of Osiris, they too might find certain features of Christianity intelligible. Gospel fragments survive in Egyptian papyri from around 100 CE, and direct literary evidence of Gnostic Christianity among laypersons remains from the third century. But the old religion did not simply disappear, even though paganism was in retreat by this time. Nor, on the other hand, did Egyptian pagans often attack Christians before the persecution of Decius in 249–51, and there was no official trouble from Rome before that time. Worried that Christianity might corrupt the loyalties of his armies, Decius caused many believers to be tortured and killed all over the empire – including Egypt, as shown by papyrus certificates probably meant to prove that suspect Christians were willing "to sacrifice and show piety to the gods." Even after the epochal transition from the policies of Diocletian to those of Constantine, evidence of pagan belief survives plentifully from the fourth century, but Christian persecution of pagans had begun. In 385 a visiting Byzantine official prohibited sacrifices and ordered the temples shut, but when the patriarch Theophilus tried six years later to make a temple into a church, he started a riot – which did not stop him from destroying the temple. By the early fifth century only southern districts still held out against the church, though some individuals still professed Hellenic paganism in the sixth century. The Christian theology that grew out of these conflicts was enriched by the fertile culture of Alexandria and shaped by Greek, Jewish and Iranian influences that found a home in Egypt. By the late second century, some of the Christian faithful had become hostile even to the claims of their co-religionists, which were as yet unrestrained by strong central institutions and still luxuriating in the hothouse of Mediterranean piety. One set of beliefs, eventually labelled "orthodox" by those who held them, challenged and eventually vanquished or at least displaced other views called "heretical" – Gnostic, Manichaean, Monophysite and many, many others.[19] In Egypt, in the midst of this cultural and spiritual turmoil, over the course of several centuries when the Ptolemies, the Romans and the Byzantines ruled the Nile valley, other persons unknown to us produced the writings that we call the *Hermetica*.

Far from Egypt, in the Danube region in 174 CE, occurred a celebrated incident that conveys the religious commotion of the period and tells us something about another set of sacred texts, the *Chaldaean Oracles*. That year, when Marcus Aurelius began his *Meditations*, was the eighth in the wars between the Danube tribes and the Stoic emperor. A Byzantine epitome of the historian Cassius Dio explains that after subduing the Marcomanni, the imperial armies confronted the Quadi, who trapped *Legio XII Fulminata* - the "Thunderstruck" – in a closed place that exposed the troops to parching sun. Miraculously, the thunder of a sudden cloudburst shook the barbarians, while the heaven-sent rain eased the Roman thirst. The Byzantine epitomizer denies that an Egyptian magician called Arnouphis brought the rain by praying to "the aerial Hermes," claiming instead that it was his own God who heard the pleas of Christian soldiers in the Twelfth Legion. This famous episode interested many other writers, some of whom maintained that the emperor himself called down the rain. One version, preserved in a Byzantine lexicon, mentions

> Ioulianos, Chaldaean and philosopher, father of the Ioulianos called *theourgos* … [who] wrote works on theurgy, ritual and verse oracles, as well as many … other secret books on knowledge of this sort… . They say that once, when the Romans were exhausted by thirst, he made the dark clouds come together all at once and send forth a furious thunderstorm with continuous thunder and lightning, and that Ioulianos accomplished this by some kind of wisdom. But there are those who say that Arnouphis, the Egyptian philosopher, worked this wonder.[20]

This rival of Arnouphis, servant of Thoth, was the younger of two Julians, both called "Chaldaean." The father was known simply as a philosopher, the son as a theurge; and it was the son who may have written or redacted the texts that we know in the obscure fragments entitled *Chaldaean Oracles*. Christian authors from Arnobius in the late third century through Synesius in the early fifth knew the *Oracles*, but it was Porphyry and later pagan Neoplatonists who most valued them; Plotinus alone of his school ignored them. Like other Greek oracles, their form is hexameter verse; their subject is philosophical theology and theurgic ritual. The point of the rites, which call a god down into a statue or into a human medium, is to help the human soul escape its bodily prison and rise up to divinity. The theology of the *Oracles* provides intellectual justification for these ritual prescriptions. In some particulars, especially the notion of First and Second Intellects, the Chaldaean system resembles that of Numenius of Apamea, a Neopythagorean of the second century. Porphyry wrote a lost commentary on the *Oracles*, and

many of his followers through the Byzantine period and later shared his fascination with their involved doctrine. Except that it was conventional to attribute theological wisdom to one of the sacred peoples of the East, why the *Oracles* were called *Chaldaean* is unclear.[21]

The highest entities mentioned in the *Oracles* are a First Paternal Intellect, absolutely transcendent; a Second Demiurgic Intellect, who proceeds from the Father and knows the cosmos as well as himself; and, within the First Intellect, a female Power, called Hecate, who produces or is the World Soul. Hecate is a conduit for influences traveling between the intelligible and sensible realms. At the nether end of the All lies Matter, made by the Demiurge. The physical world is a foul tomb and a jail from which the higher human soul must escape, shedding the lower soul's *ochēma* ("vehicle") or *chitōn* ("garment") acquired during its descent through the stars and planets. Ascetic conduct and correct ritual will free the soul from the astrological bonds of Fate and defend it against the demonic powers who fill the ontological space between gods and mortals.[22] In their theology and theurgy, the *Oracles* testify to the desire to hear the gods talk about themselves, a wish that still ran strong among pagan believers in the first Christian centuries. Late in the first century, Plutarch of Chaeroneia seems to have thought for a while that the old oracles had waned. But Ammonius, the Athenian Platonist who taught Plutarch and studied with Alexandrian philosophers, traveled to Delphi to quiz Apollo on his place in the divine hierarchies. A century later, when Plotinus died, his student Porphyry sent a questioner there to ask Apollo about the fate of his master's soul, and the god's reassuring reply showed a good grasp of Plotinian terminology. Oracles of theological content answering large questions about the soul and divinity came not just from Delphi but from Claros, Didyma and other sites across the eastern Mediterranean, where civic delegations and private persons traveled in the first three centuries of the new era to query the god and then return home to inscribe what they heard on public monuments. As of the early second century, over three hundred such civic inscriptions are to be found just from Claros; displays of religious curiosity so conspicuous and expensive were not the simple annals of the poor. Moreover, some of them show that Apollo had studied his philosophy.[23]

From Hellenistic times forward, the theologies of the eastern Mediterranean were complicated by the tangle of correspondences between the traditional Greek pantheon and the newfound gods of nations subjugated

by Alexander and later conquerors. Even a simple cultic act without theological embroidery would require the worshipper to address the god and hence to know the correct divine names and titles. One response to this crisis of identity was syncretism, blending several gods into one; monotheism, henotheism or simply clarifying a lower god's relation to some higher deity might resolve the same problem. Deeper theological puzzles could evolve from simple ignorance of what to call a god in prayer or ritual. When a delegation from Oenoanda in southwest Asia Minor traveled north toward the coast at Claros in the second century, they seem to have had something profounder in mind than nomenclature, for this is part of what they had carved on an altar when they came home:

> Self-born, untaught, motherless, unshakeable,
> Giving place to no name, many-named, dwelling in fire,
> Such is God: we are a portion of God, his angels.
> This, then, to the questioners about God's nature
> The god replied.

That Lactantius and other Christians cited these lines is not surprising; such language (R.L. Fox calls the inscription "a burst of negative theology") showed heathens making the case against polytheism. Neoplatonist pagans had similar impulses, which moved Porphyry in the late third century to collect related material in his *Philosophy from Oracles*. Whether or not this work of Porphyry's reveals traces of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, the community of interest is clear enough. The triadic godhead of the *Oracles* seemed not only to reflect the metaphysics of Plato's *Philebus* but also to foreshadow the hypostases of Plotinus as well as Augustine's Trinity.[24]

A less likely triad – Kronos, Rhea and Zeus – in which the ancients read the same theological lessons appeared in another sacred text, the Rhapsodic Theogony or *Sacred Discourse in Twenty-Four Rhapsodies* attributed to Orpheus. It was mainly this theogonical literature that made the Neoplatonists regard Orpheus as the supreme theologian, but his renown was far more ancient. His origins were from outside Hellas, from Thrace and Scythia, where shamans practiced an ecstatic religion of soul-travel and attached their doctrines to the names of Orpheus and other mythic sages. Some of the myths of Orpheus, especially his journey to the underworld, suited the ecstasies of the shamans, and so it was his name that chiefly identified these ideas when they entered Ionia in the seventh or sixth century BCE. Also in the sixth

century, Greeks heard from the East about cosmogonies that they called Orphic; these new myths said that the cosmos was born from an egg and that time was the god who engendered the world. These stories about the begetting of the gods and other accounts of the soul's origin and destiny were attributed to Orpheus in the sixth and fifth centuries, after which time it was commonplace to connect him with theological material of the widest variety. Thus, while there is an Orphic literature comprising the many and diverse texts fathered on this mythic figure, there was no single Orphic dogma or Orphic cult. Pythagoreans – including perhaps the master himself – sometimes made Orpheus the author of their writings, and practitioners of Bacchic cults claimed him for their own. Euripides, Plato and other authors of the classical period knew him well, and their advertisement of Orphic materials assured his fame in later times.[25]

One group that revered Orpheus lived in western Asia Minor in the second or third century CE. Their cult sang hymns by torchlight to a number of gods – mostly the usual Homeric figures – offering them fumigations and libations. One member of the sect may have written the eighty-seven *Orphic Hymns* that survive; they seem to be a coherent collection. Judged by the number (eight) of hymns given him, Dionysos was the god most honored in the cult. The hymns vary from thirty lines to six, most of them devoted to the god's names and attributes. The hopes that the hymns express are predictable: good health, economic success, peace and so on. Some of the terminology of the hymns shows that their author knew the language of the mysteries. Others who borrowed the name of Orpheus had different aims. Neopythagorean *Orphica* revived the literary habits of the first Pythagoreans, and Jewish students of Orpheus exploited his traditional association with Musaeus; they claimed that he was really Moses and that he was Orpheus' teacher – rather than the reverse. An Orphic *Testament*, probably of the first century BCE, makes Orpheus recant his polytheism and teach Musaeus about the one God. Alexandria produced syncretist *Orphica* in the next century. It was hard for any Hellenistic philosophical school or any religion of late antiquity to resist the versatile Orpheus. There were even *Orphica* dealing with astrology, alchemy, magical gems and other topics like those treated in the technical *Hermetica*.[26]

But the Orphic text that inspired Neoplatonic metaphysics and theology was the Rhapsodic Theogony. Damascius, last head of the Academy in the early sixth century, detected three separate Orphic theogonies, and

subsequent scholarship has discovered three more, tracing the earliest to about 500 BCE. The "rhapsodies" were the twenty-four sections of the whole, numbered like Homeric books, and they told an incredibly intricate tale of theogony and mythology. In the form known to the Neoplatonists, the Rhapsodic Theogony seems to have circulated as early as the first century BCE. One example will illustrate what Plato's followers saw in this bizarre Orphic mythology, which was far more complex and contradictory than the account in Hesiod's *Theogony*. In its primeval state, according to the Orphic rhapsodist, the world had been made by a god called *Phanēs* (the Manifest) or *Prōtogonos* (Firstborn), but Zeus swallowed Phanes and then produced the world known to mankind. From a Neoplatonic perspective, the universe of Phanes corresponded to Plato's intelligible world of Ideas, while Zeus gave rise to a sensible cosmos of matter. From the time of Plutarch of Athens in the early fifth century through the period of Olympiodorus in the Alexandrian school of the later sixth century, the Neoplatonists returned time and again to the Orphic theogony. Proclus, who headed the Athenian Academy in the second half of the fifth century, was the most prolific interpreter of Orpheus among the Neoplatonists, and he may have learned his devotion to the *Orphica* from Iamblichus and Porphyry.[27]

Another source of divine wisdom with an equally long and complex pedigree survives in the twelve books of *Sibylline Oracles*, composed between the second century BCE and the seventh century CE and assembled toward the end of that period by a Byzantine editor. About half the material in the existing collection can be traced to Jewish communities in Egypt, other parts to Syria and Asia Minor. The prevailing theme is Jewish apocalyptic in a loosely pagan framework with some Christian interpolation. Like the Orphic *Rhapsodies* and *Chaldaean Oracles*, the *Sibylline Oracles* are poetic in form – hexameter verse – and their subject matter is the standard apocalyptic catalogue of public disasters, set in the context of universal history from Creation through Judgment to the Golden Age beyond. The Sibyl is a woman old enough to have watched the parade of war, flood, plague and famine from a primordial vantage point; like the biblical Isaiah or Jeremiah, she makes prophecy out of current events or recent history, but she authenticates her predictions by claiming to be a thousand years old. Her message is that idolatry and animal worship are doomed; the one God alone deserves worship. Her language is loose enough to satisfy many questioners. The third book of the *Sibylline Oracles* is one of the older parts of the

collection, dating from the middle of the second century BCE. It may have been written in the Egyptian city of Leontopolis, north of Memphis, where Onias IV of the great family of Jewish high priests built a temple under Ptolemy VI Philometor. This third book speaks favorably of the Ptolemies, echoing the *Potter's Oracle* in the promise that "God will send a King from the Sun."[28] The composite fourth book is a Jewish revision from the late first century CE of earlier Hellenistic material. It may come from Syria, while the fifth book takes us back to Leontopolis, where the Egyptian Jews of the early second century CE were no longer happy with their pagan neighbors. Book twelve is from the middle of the third century CE, more likely from Alexandria than Leontopolis. In describing the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the Sibyl of book twelve predicts that "at his prayer he will shower rainwater out of season" – another memory of the rain-miracle attributed elsewhere to Julian, the Chaldaean theurge.[29]

Vergil may have been influenced by a Jewish Sibyl in his fourth *Eclogue*. He called it a "Cumaean poem," but the vision of a Golden Age of peace when the lion will lie down with the lamb and a divine child will inaugurate a new era of justice contains much that is nonclassical, though precise correspondences to the *Sibylline Oracles* are also lacking. In the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, Vergil has his hero seek out Apollo's temple in Cumae to consult the Sibyl, who leads him down through Hades to the Elysian fields and Anchises, the hero's father; paternal promises of hard-won glory for Aeneas and Rome reinforce the Sibyl's predictions. Christian writers were naturally taken with Vergil's messianic *Eclogue*, but the drama of Aeneas at Cumae left a larger mark on the greater world of letters in antiquity, where the Sibyl had long been a familiar figure. Her title was at first a person's name, perhaps, and her style of prophecy appeared in northwestern Asia Minor toward the end of the seventh century BCE. Heraclitus left the first surviving text that mentions her, and the cities of Ionia knew of her sisters in archaic times, as did the Italian outpost of Cumae by the late sixth century. Modern archeology may have found her cave in that eerie place of power near Naples. A much older legend says that a Roman king, Tarquinius Superbus, bought prophetic books from a Sibyl, and Varrò linked this story with the oracle of Cumae. From early times the Romans seem actually to have kept a set of Greek verse oracles on the Capitoline. Until the temple of Jupiter that housed them perished in 83 BCE, the Sibylline books instructed the Romans many times (about fifty known instances) after the early fifth

century. When some public catastrophe or weird phenomenon warned that the gods were unhappy, the Senate directed the guardians of the books to consult them, and the usual advice was to build a temple or institute a new rite – measures seldom as terrible as the practice of burying alive two Gauls and two Greeks, first noted in 228. So valued were the books that the Republic appointed a commission to search for replacements a few years after the temple of Jupiter was destroyed. Augustus and his successors also respected them, at least as a source of propaganda, but controlled them closely.[30]

The most important work of Greek literature showing Sibylline influence was the *Alexandra* written in the early third century BCE in Alexandria by Lycophron, who transformed Homer's Cassandra into a Sibyl and made her rave in muddled fury. But fine literature for leisured readers was not the main medium of Sibylline prophecy; the professionals who collected the oracles for ready dissemination and explication among broader social circles had the special name of *chrēsmologoi* or "oraclemongers." We know that the *Sibylline Oracles* were in Rome by the later first century BCE because Alexander Polyhistor used the third book for the biblical story of the Tower of Babel in his *Chaldaean History*. Vergil wrote his fourth *Eclogue* around 40 BCE. Early Christian authors after Hermas in the middle of the second century were well acquainted with Vergil's Sibyl and with others. Clement of Alexandria saw them as useful pagans, but Tertullian found no good in them. By the late second century, however, some Christians put as much trust in the Sibyls as in biblical prophets. Theophilus was the first Christian to make extensive use of the *Sibylline Oracles*, especially book three, but their chief Christian advocate was also the main champion of the *Hermetica* among Christians – Lactantius. His *Divine Institutes* contains hundreds of brief quotations from six books of the *Sibylline Oracles*, and he transmitted to the middle ages the names of the ten Sibyls in their traditional configuration. Eusebius recorded a speech of the Emperor Constantine that describes the judgment day by way of the eighth book of the *Sibylline Oracles*, but, unlike Lactantius and other church Fathers, the emperor treated the Sibyl more as a pagan priestess than a biblical prophet.[31] Having read Lactantius' account of the Sibylline prophecies, Augustine eventually admitted the Cumaean, Erythraean and other Sibyls to the heavenly city, but elsewhere he expressed his doubts:

> The Sibyl or Sibyls, Orpheus, some Hermes or other, and various seers, divines, sages or philosophers of the gentiles are reputed to have told or foretold the truth about the Son of God or God the Father. In

fact, this somewat serves to refute the foolishness of the pagans, not to embrace their authority, since we show ourselves worshipping that God about whom they cannot stay silent, daring in some cases to teach their kindred peoples to worship idols and demons, in other cases not daring to prohibit them.[32]

In Augustine's eyes, the Sibyl was no fit companion for a Christian as long as she kept company with Orpheus and Hermes – though ten Sibyls would later surround the great image of Hermes carved in the pavement of the cathedral of Siena in 1488 by Giovanni di Stefano and also accompany the prophets on Michelangelo's ceiling of 1512. One reason for Augustine's ambivalence about the Sibyl was that Lactantius and others had linked her books with *Orphica*, *Hermetica* and *Chaldaean Oracles* which condoned the magical practices that Augustine thought to be the snares of demons. Augustine was right to worry about magic in the *Hermetica*, though – with a few important exceptions – he would not have found it in the theoretical *Hermetica* translated here.

Technical and theoretical *Hermetica*

Two modern experts on the *Hermetica*, Walter Scott and André-Jean Festugière, distinguished the "popular" occultist writings attributed to Hermes from the "learned" or "philosophical" treatises translated in this volume. Critics have questioned the meaning and historicity of their categories – would they have been recognized, for example, by an author of a work of either sort? – and Garth Fowden has argued persuasively that all the *Hermetica*, whether practical or theoretical, magical or philosophical, can be understood as responses to the same milieu, the very complex Greco-Egyptian culture of Ptolemaic, Roman and early Christian times.[33] With regard to origins and interrelations, the claim that both types of *Hermetica* come from a common environment rings true, yet two other facts also bear consideration: first, that the seventeen Greek treatises of the *Corpus Hermeticum* came to be treated as a distinct body of writing, though perhaps for no better reason than the accidents of textual transmission or the prejudices of Byzantine compilers; and second, that these seventeen Greek *logoi* are not much concerned with astrology, very little with magic and not at all with alchemy. They deal instead with theological or, in some loose sense,

philosophical issues: they reveal to man knowledge of the origins, nature and moral properties of divine, human and material being so that man can use this knowledge to save himself. The same pious philosophy or philosophical piety – a blend of theology, cosmogony, anthropogony, ethics, soteriology and eschatology – also characterizes the Latin *Asclepius*, the forty Hermetic texts and fragments collected in the *Anthology* of Stobaeus, the three *Hermetica* found with the *Nag Hammadi Codices*, the Armenian *Definitions* and the Vienna fragments. Although traces of occult belief, astrology especially, are evident in many of these works, even dominant in three or four not translated here, their central philosophical and theological concerns do, in fact, distinguish them from what Father Festugière called "popular Hermetism."[34]

Around 200 CE the Christian writer Clement of Alexandria knew of "forty-two books of Hermes" considered indispensable for the rituals of Egyptian priests; the list, four of whose items he calls "the astrological books of Hermes," somewhat resembles a description of sacred writings inscribed in the second century BCE on the wall of an Egyptian temple in Edfu.[35] Clement's report accords with our fragmentary knowledge of the Greco-Egyptian astrology that began to develop as early as the third century BCE. Although it was a Greek work of the third or second century BCE, composed perhaps in Alexandria and dealing with configurations of stars regarded as divinities, the title and other features of the *Salmeschiniaka* hint of Babylonian origins, though nothing proves such a connection. In the middle of the second century BCE, the unknown author of an astrology manual fathered his work on a pharaoh who ruled five centuries earlier, Nechepso, and on the high priest Petosiris, who reputedly took his revelation from Hermes and may correspond to an historical figure of the fourth century. The fragments of the handbook bearing the names of Nechepso and Petosiris survive mainly in the *Anthology* of Vettius Valens, a Roman astrologer who wrote in Greek in the second century CE. The most important of the astrological *Hermetica* known to us is the *Liber Hermetis*, a Latin text whose Greek original contained elements traceable to the third century BCE. This *Book of Hermes* describes the decans, a peculiarly Egyptian way of dividing the zodiacal circle into thirty-six compartments, each with its own complex of astrological attributes. Some Hermetic texts were tight in their focus, applying astrological theory to special circumstances: a *Brontologion* analyzed the significance of thunder as it was heard in various months, and a treatise *Peri seismōn* related earthquakes to astrological signs. Of broader

use were the *Iatromathēmatika* or tracts on astrological medicine, such as the *Book of Asclepius Called Myriogenesis* which discussed medical consequences of the theory of correspondence between human microcosm and universal macrocosm. Astrological botany and mineralogy were also favored topics. The *Holy Book of Hermes to Asclepius* based its botanical prescriptions on relations between plants and decans, while the *Fifteen Stars*, *Stones*, *Plants and Images* singled out particular stars as determinants of pharmaceutical power.[36]

Another kind of occult wisdom attractive to early Hermetic authors was alchemy, which made its first literary mark on Egypt after 200 BCE in the writings of Bolos Democritus of Mendes; the vestiges of his work show that Bolos described processes involving gold, silver, gems, dyes and other substances that became the main ingredients of the alchemical work. After Bolos but before the Christian era, a number of alchemical treatises began to appear under the names of Hermes, Agathodaimon, Isis and others. The latest of these alchemical apocrypha date from the second or third century CE, and today we know them only as fragments – no more than thirty or so – from later alchemical treatises that mention either Hermes or another Hermetic figure. One of the larger remains of this literature, the *Anepigraphos* ("*Untitled*"), cites the authority of Hermes and Agathodaimon for an allegory on the making of silver, called "the moon," by cooking and melting various substances. In another, entitled *Isis the Prophetess to her Son Horus*, the angel Amnael reveals the alchemical mystery: that just as wheat engenders wheat or man begets man so gold breeds gold. These alchemical *Hermetica* were known to Zosimus, a native of Panopolis who lived in Alexandria around 300 CE. Zosimus has greatly interested students of the *Corpus Hermeticum* because he mingled Hermetic theosophy with the alchemist's pragmatic aims and left at least two works that shed light on the larger Hermetic project, especially on the kinship between the "popular" and "learned" treatises.[37]

The prologue of the first book of the collection called *Kuranides* says that "the god Hermes Trismegistus received this book from the angels as god's greatest gift and passed it on to all men fit to receive secrets (*mustika*)." The book also claims to be a compilation from two others by Kuranos, which may be a version of the Persian name Cyrus, and by Harpocration, an otherwise unknown author of late imperial times (not the rhetorician, Valerius Harpocration); the same work refers internally to an *Archaikos*

Biblos, an *Old-Time Book*, probably an early bestiary. This first of the six surviving *Kuranides* has twenty-four chap-ters, one each for the letter of the Greek alphabet that begins the names of the plant, bird, fish and stone treated in the chapter. The second *Kuranis* has forty-seven alphabetized chapters on quadrupeds and their medical properties; the four others handle birds, fish, plants and stones in the same way. Manuscripts of all but the last two books carry ascriptions to Hermes Trismegistus, but philology has traced them to the same Bolos Democritus who was a fountainhead of alchemical wisdom. If Bolos was their progenitor, the *Kuranides* represent the largest survival in Greek of a literature initiated by him that treated a wide range of natural phenomena and emphasized their medical and magical uses.[38]

Healing and magic were also prominent aims of another large body of texts that often refer to Hermes and his retinue, the Greek and Demotic Magical Papyri. The documents that scholars have included in this category cover a considerable span of time, from the second century BCE to the fifth century CE, and their contents are mainly spells of practical intent, meant to conjure a god or demon, bring a vision or a dream, foretell the future, attain invisibility, compel a lover, thwart an enemy, catch a thief, ease the pain of gout or drive insects from a house. The people who wrote the papyri had hundreds of reasons for needing a magic spell and scores of gods and spirits to call upon. Hermes, naturally, was one of them, as for example in *PGM* VII.919–24:

> Hermes' wondrous victory charm which you are to keep in your sandals: Take a tablet gold like the sun and inscribe on it with a bronze stylus and put it on whatever you want and see what it does on a boat, on a horse, and you will be amazed. These are the characters: [magic symbols, then] THOOUTH, give victory, strength, influence to the wearer.[39]

Some of the papyri are less pedestrian in their ambitions and more imaginative in their décor; *PGM* V.370–446, provides the following recipe:

> Take 28 leaves from a pithy laurel tree and some virgin earth and seed of wormwood, wheat meal and the herb calf's snout … pounded together with … the liquid of an ibis egg and made into a uniform dough and into a figure of Hermes wearing a mantle, while the moon is ascending… . Let Hermes be holding a herald's staff. And write the spell on hieratic papyrus or on a goose's windpipe … and insert it into the figure for … inspiration (*enpneumatōsis*)…. [Put the spell] at the feet of Hermes … and recite as on the altar you burn incense.
>
> Hermes, lord of the world, who're in the heart,
> O circle of Selene, spherical
> And square, the founder of the words of speech,

Pleader of justice's cause …

… who with your lamps

Give joy to those beneath earth's depths, to mortals
Who've finished life. The prophet of events
And Dream divine you're said to be, who send
Forth oracles by day and night; you cure
All pains of mortals with your healing cares.
Hither, O blessed one …

… both graciously appear

And graciously render the task for me,
A pious man…
Without deceit appear and prophesy to me.

Although the prescribed figure of Hermes would make a crude little doll, the spell gives the god functions of great scope, reaching to cosmology, language, justice, death, divination and healing – some of the same issues treated in the *Hermetica* translated here, which never once mention the word "magic." Like the astrological, alchemical and naturalhistorical *Hermetica*, the Magical Papyri promised their readers an occult technology, a way to manipulate the divine and natural worlds for more or less concrete and immediate purposes. Since specific instructions of this sort are rare in the philosophical *Hermetica*, visible only in a few isolated directions for ritual and prayer, Fowden's term "technical" describes the more pragmatic texts better than Festugière's adjective "popular." There is no reason to suppose that either variety of *Hermetica* was more popular, in any sense, than the other.[40]

If Fowden is right to claim that "the technical and philosophical books are … related aspects of … a practical spiritual 'way,'" then in the philosophical treatises one expects to find the theory behind the praxis of the technical *Hermetica.* But when one looks in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the *Asclepius*, the Stobaeus excerpts or the Nag Hammadi *Hermetica* for a theory of magic, something like what Proclus wrote *On the Hieratic Art according to the Greeks*, this seems not to be the case, although there are passages that assume such a theoretical framework for remarks on astrology, demonology or related topics. Instead of a theory of magic, the theoretical *Hermetica* present a theory of salvation through knowledge or *gnōsis*, yet this theory was the product of a culture that made no clear, rigid distinction between *religion* as the province of such lofty concerns as the fate of the soul and *magic* as a merely instrumental device of humbler intent.[41] The spell

cited above from *PGM* V, for example, has as its goal *enpneumatōsis* or "inspiration," literally, filling with *pneuma* or spirit. Was it a religious or a practical aim to seek such inspiration from Hermes? What we know of the role of *pneuma* in Gnostic and early Christian religion and also of its place in Stoic physics and Galenic medicine should convince us that the question implies a false, unhistorical dichotomy.[42] Salvation in the largest sense – the resolution of man's fate wherever it finds him – was a common concern of theoretical and technical *Hermetica* alike, though the latter texts generally advertised a quotidian deliverance from banal misfortunes of disease, poverty and social strife, while the former offered a grander view of salvation through knowledge of God, the other and the self.

This distinction, as Fowden and others have shown, gives us only rough, provisional categories better suited to some texts than to others. Although the excerpts in the *Anthology* of Stobaeus have commonly been treated as "philosophical," a term that fits most of them as well as it suits the *Corpus Hermeticum* proper, some of the Stobaean material clearly qualifies as technical. *Excerpt* VI deals with astrology, in particular with the decans and their "sons," the star demons. Festugière highlighted the conclusion of this treatise, which promises that "one who has not ignored these things can understand god precisely and, if one dare say so, even see god with his own eyes and, having seen god, become blessed." In Festugière's words, the treatise "finishes with a conclusion perfectly suited to the taste of a Hermetism ready to attach praise of piety and *gnōsis* to any doctrine at all." In other words, the Hermetic authors found technical information on the decan stars a suitable prelude to *gnōsis*.[43] *Excerpts* XXIV–XXVI, which make a coherent group, describe the soul's functions in light of its astral origins as well as differences among embodied souls arising from variations in astrological and elementary constitution. *S.H.* XXVI concludes that "breath (*atmos*) … intermixed with soul forces them together in a common nature, whether favorable or not. The soul watches over its good order by remaining from the beginning in a relation of community and intimacy with this breath." In light of the Hermetic recipe for *enpneumatōsis* cited above, one may suppose that this account of breath in the soul could be meaningful for someone who wanted the god's inspiration. The longest and most interesting of the Stobaean excerpts, the *Korē Kosmou* or "Daughter of the Cosmos," forthrightly declares that "no prophet about to raise his hands to the gods has ever ignored any of the things that are, so that philosophy and magic

(*philosophia men kai mageia*) may nourish the soul and medicine heal the body"; this suggests that all knowledge – medical, magical and any other – bears on the quest for gnostic salvation. Magic comes closest to philosophy, perhaps, in the famous "god-making" passages of the *Asclepius* (23–4, 37–8) which show that material objects can be manipulated to draw a god down into a statue and thus ensoul it.[44]

Oddly enough, it was the alchemist Zosimos who took the strongest stand against magic of any Hermetic author, describing it as a blunt tool useless for purposes that need immaterial instruments:

> Zoroaster … arrogantly claims that all the evils of fate, both particular and universal, can be turned away by magic of embodied speech. In *The Life Within*, however, Hermes accuses even magic, saying that the spiritual man who has come to know himself has no need to direct anything through magic, even if it is regarded as good, nor need he constrain necessity, but let it develop and have its results. He should just go on seeking himself and, when he comes to know god … let fate do as she likes.

From his other writings, it is clear that Zosimos did not mean to exclude all physical operations from the work of the spirit; indeed, his own alchemy blends indistinctly into instructions for practical piety.[45] At the same time, his comments on magic, like the contrary advice of the *Korē Kosmou*, show that categories roughly analogous to modern usage of such terms as "magic," "philosophy" and "religion" were available to the very people who so frequently mixed them. Mixed aims and methods are evident in the sixth tractate of the sixth *Nag Hammadi Codex*, the "Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth." This work is a leading example of what Fowden calls an "initiatory" Hermetic text concerned with the final phases of a "philosophical *paideia*," the last steps that the initiate takes to recognize his true nature and then, in knowing God, to attain godhood. *NHC* VI.6 shares these sublime intentions with some parts of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, especially *C.H.* I and XIII, but most of the other seventeen Greek treatises are "preparatory" in Fowden's taxonomy. They describe various lower stages in the progress toward wisdom that the initiate must acquire before enjoying the rebirth offered in *C.H.* XIII or *NHC* VI.6.[46]

If the preliminary states of spiritual growth differed from one another, the changes among them may explain a striking feature of the *Corpus* which has troubled its readers for many years, the apparently great divergences in doctrine between its component treatises and even within an individual *logos*. Scholars have taken pains to analyze and schematize parts of the

Corpus as monist or dualist, optimist or pessimist, but Fowden proposes to see such variations as sequential rather than contradictory. Thus, a positive view of the cosmos as good and worth understanding would suit an earlier stage of the initiate's labors and, hence, a treatise focusing on a time when the body's needs were still great, while a negative treatment of the world as evil and unworthy of thought might befit a farther station in the spirit's journey and a different treatise on topics closer to the culmination of *gnōsis,* which entailed liberation from the body. In any event, the texts themselves show that the Hermetic authors felt no obligation to respect the boundaries drawn around their writings by modern critics. *NHC* VI.6, for example, seeks nothing less than "the great divine vision," but it also contains two ritual passages that would not be out of place in the Magical Papyri (one of which includes the same prayer that concludes the *Asclepius*). In the second such passage, the initiate says,

> I give thanks by singing a hymn to you. For I have received life from you, when you made me wise. I praise you. I call your name that is hidden within me: a ō ee ō ēēē ōōō iii ōōōō ooooo ōōōōō uuuuuu ōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōōō. You are the one who exists with the spirit. I sing a hymn to you reverently.

Hermes, the mystagogue, then directs his "son [to] write this book for the temple at Diospolis in hieroglyphic characters, entitling it 'The Eighth Reveals the Ninth.'"[47] This exchange between Trismegistus and his disciple confirms what Iamblichus said about Egyptian theology, that

> they certainly do not just speculate about these things. They recommend rising up through priestly theurgy toward the higher and more universal levels above fate, to the god and craftsman, and without material attachment or any other help at all except observing the proper time. Hermes also gave instruction in this way, which Bitus the prophet translated for King Ammon after finding it carved in hieroglyphic letters in shrines of Sais in Egypt.

Although Iamblichus seems to exclude any "material attachment" from Hermetic theurgy, the same cannot be said of the *Asclepius*, which in its "art of making gods" permitted "a conformable power arising from the nature of matter" and even mentioned "a mixture of plants, stones and spices" in describing the nature of the gods called down to animate their statues. *PGM* IV.475–829, formerly known as the "Mithras Liturgy," begins by calling for "the juices of herbs and spices," and it addresses the elementary powers of spirit, fire, water and earth with mystical noises like those that appear on almost every page of the Magical Papyri: "EY EIA EE, water of water, the first of the water in me, OOO AAA EEE, earthy material, the first of the

earthy material in me, YE YOE, my complete body." But the same invocation seeks deliverance beyond the bodily elements "to immortal birth and … to my underlying nature, so that … I may gaze upon the immortal." Just as Iamblichus said, this famous document exhorts the initiate to rise up through theurgy to a divine rebirth; its devices are concrete and technical, but it sets those procedures in a matrix of theory explored more thoroughly in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius*.[48]

Hermetic collections

When A. D. Nock edited the *Corpus*, he used twenty-eight manuscripts dating from the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries, but fifteen of them contain only the first fourteen treatises or, in some cases, even fewer. Two manuscripts that include all seventeen *logoi* also preserve a comment on *C.H.* 1.18 written by Michael Psellus, an important Byzantine scholar of the eleventh century. Finding the words of the biblical Genesis in this heathen cosmogony, Psellus remarked of its author that "this wizard seems to have had more than a passing acquaintance with holy writ. Making an eager go of it, he tries his hand at the creation of the world, not scrupling to record the cherished Mosaic expressions themselves." It is noteworthy that a Byzantine Christian learned in Neoplatonism wished to defame the Bible-reading Hermes as a *goes* or "wizard," especially since the seventeen Greek treatises say so little about occult topics. Passages on astrology and magic in the theoretical *Hermetica* are even scarcer in *C.H.* I–XIV than in XVI–XVIII and the *Asclepius*. Could it be, then, that what we call the *Corpus Hermeticum* took shape just as a consequence of the abhorrence of magic expressed by Psellus? If so, it is worth noting the likelihood that he shared this pious loathing with other Byzantine scholars who transmitted the *Corpus* from his time to the fourteenth century, when the earliest extant manuscripts were written.[49]

Byzantine editors and copyists, then, may have immortalized their prejudices by selecting and redacting our *Corpus* from a larger body of *Hermetica* that certainly gave much attention to the occultism that is so inconspicuous in the theoretical treatises, especially the first fourteen. When Marsilio Ficino produced the first Latin translation of the *Corpus* in 1463, he

worked from a Greek manuscript that ends at *C.H.* XIV, and the new print technology amplified the influence of this truncated version after 1471, when his new translation first appeared in print. Although other *logoi* were added to Latin translations and Greek editions in the sixteenth century, the widely read Basel edition of Ficino's works printed in 1576 still stopped with C.H. XIV, followed by the *Asclepius*. Ficino gave his fourteen treatises the collective title *Pimander*, the name still used in Parthey's *Poemander* of 1854, another edition of the first fourteen treatises only. The long segregation of these most un-magical parts of the *Corpus* from other *Hermetica* helped obscure the evidence of their original setting in late antiquity, and the effects of this separation on the post-medieval reception of the Hermetic tradition were also momentous. For Christian readers of the Latin West and Greek East alike, a *Corpus* purged of magic would better befit the authorship of the pagan sage described in the *Suda* around the year 1000: "Hermes Trismegistus … was an Egyptian wise man who flourished before Pharaoh's time. He was called Trismegistus on account of his praise of the trinity, saying that there is one divine nature in the trinity."[50] The *Hermetica* are full of random pieties, which is why Christians from patristic times onward so much admired them.

But before the eleventh century – when Psellus seems to have known the *Corpus* in roughly its present form, around the same time when the first collections of technical *Hermetica* were assembled by Byzantine scholars – there is no sign of the *Corpus* as such, although individual treatises were evidently in use as early as the third century CE. John of Stobi, or Stobaeus, seems not to have known the *Corpus* as a whole, but he compiled an *Anthology* around the year 500 that contains forty excerpts of varying length from Hermetic writings, including parts of C.H. II, IV, IX and the *Asclepius*. Excerpts that do not give partial texts (texts that represent a separate and sounder tradition than other manuscripts of the *Corpus*, which just on that account would seem to have been assembled after Stobaeus) of the *Corpus* or the *Asclepius* fall into four groups, containing discourses of: Hermes, Hermes to Tat, Hermes to Ammon, and Isis to Horus.[51] Earlier than Stobaeus is an interesting remark from Cyril of Alexandria, who knew C.H. XI and XIV as well as other treatises now lost; he died around the middle of the fifth century. Much like Psellus, Cyril disapproved of Hermes as a magus and idolater, but he was fascinated by biblical and other resonances in his works, writing that

this Hermes of Egypt, although he was a theurgist (*telestēs*), ever sitting in the temple precincts near the idols, had the good sense to acquire the writings of Moses, even if he did not use them at all blamelessly or correctly, having but a part of them… . The one in Athens who collected the fifteen books called "Hermetic" (*Hermaika*) made himself a record of this in his own writings.

Although Cyril apparently knew a Hermetic collection, his other references to Hermetic writings do not show that these "fifteen books" were a form of our *Corpus*. However, the earliest possible data, which come from the texts themselves (sometimes referring to one another and to *Hermetica* outside the *Corpus*), indicate that Hermetic collections of some kind circulated as early as the second or third centuries. From that period come the Vienna fragments, which refer to otherwise lost treatises by the numbers 9 and 10, thus locating them in some larger set. A scribe who copied the Nag Hammadi *Hermetica*, part of a midfourth century "library," apologized for not adding more Hermetic materials to his codex because "the discourses of that one, which have come to me, are numerous," implying that he had access to more *Hermetica* than he had transcribed, conceivably to a collection. Authors of *V.F.* B, *NHC* VI, *C.H.* V, X, XIII and XIV, *S.H.* Ill and VI and the *Asclepius* recognized groups of treatises by name, although the meanings of the labels to their original users remain unclear.[52]

If the earliest date for the Vienna fragments is the late second century CE, then that is the period of our first material evidence for theoretical (or any other) Hermetic writings. *PGM* III, which contains a prayer also used in the *Asclepius* and *NHC* VI.7, comes from the late third century. Second-century writers, Athenagoras of Athens and Philo of Byblos, used the Greek title *Trismegistos*, but the first Christian author who actually quoted a theoretical text ascribed to Hermes was Tertullian, writing early in the third century. In the middle of that century, the author of an *Exhortation to the Pagans*, previously ascribed to Justin, used a sentence from *S.H.* I.[53] The pagans themselves showed little interest in the *Hermetica* until Iamblichus, around the year 300, perhaps because they connected Hermetic writers with the Gnostics whom Plotinus attacked. Porphyry named some of the offending Gnostic works in his *Life* of Plotinus; and the appearance of some of the same titles among the *Nag Hammadi Codices*, side by side with flermetic writings, may explain why the Neoplatonists who so much admired the *Chaldaean Oracles* remained silent on the *Hermetica*.[54] One of their most avid readers in ancient times was a Christian of the late third and early fourth centuries, Lactantius, who honored Hermes for pagan prophecies that

supported Christian revelation. Lactantius knew some of our *Hermetica* and some others besides. Most important of all, he read and cited a Greek text of the *Asclepius*; he also quoted it in Latin, but his Latin text was not ours. Our Latin *Asclepius* first emerges in Augustine's *City of God*, written between 410 and 426 by a Christian much less friendly to Hermes. Thus, the *Asclepius* that we know in Latin existed before the early fifth but after the early fourth century, which is also the latest date for the Greek version used by Lactantius. The Coptic section of the *Asclepius* in *NHC* VI.8 must have existed by the middle of the fourth century. The Greek *Perfect Discourse* (*Logos teleios*) that became the Latin *Asclepius*, then, seems to have been written in the latter part of the period in which scholars generally locate the theoretical *Hermetica*, 100 to 300 CE; most would put C.H. I toward the beginning of that time. Speculations about relative datings of the texts or about more precise timings for individual treatises have not proved convincing. However, it should be noted that Jean-Pierre Mahé accepts a secondcentury limit only for the individual texts as they stand, pointing out that the materials on which they are based may come from the first century CE or even earlier.[55]

The theoretical *Hermetica* not translated in this volume are the *Excerpts* of Stobaeus, the Nag Hammadi *Hermetica*, the Armenian *Definitions* and the Vienna fragments. The fragments are too scanty to bear comment here, and, except for the Armenian *Definitions*, the others have been described above. The Hermetic texts in the sixth *Nag Hammadi Codex* are: "The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth" (VI.6); "The Prayer of Thanksgiving" (VI.7); the "Scribal Note" (VI.7a); and "Asclepius 21–29" (VI.8). One of the *Nag Hammadi Codices* went to the Coptic Museum in Cairo in 1946, a year after their discovery, but they became widely available only after 1972, when a comprehensive program of publication began. English versions of all the *Codices* can now be read in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, edited in a single volume by J.M. Robinson and including translations by many contributors. The impact of the Nag Hammadi discoveries on our understanding of the *Hermetica* has been enormous. To find theoretical Hermetic writings in *Egypt*, in *Coptic* and alongside the wildest efflorescences of the *Gnostic* imagination was a stunning challenge to the older view, whose major champion was Father Festugière, that the *Hermetica* could be entirely understood in a post- Platonic Greek context. Mahé has produced the most important and extensive studies of all the Nag

Hammadi *Hermetica*, with comparisons to the older documents in the volumes of Nock and Festugière. Mahé has also edited, translated and commented on the Vienna fragments, first noticed in 1951, and on the Armenian *Definitions* as well, whose original appeared with a Russian translation in 1956. Entitled *Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius: Definitions*, the Armenian version probably belongs to the second half of the sixth century. The term "definitions," common in Greek literature, also appears in the title of C.H. XVI, but the Armenian work is entirely different. Mahé gives it a very early date, perhaps into the first century BCE, but others have disputed the chronology. He also makes *A.D.* the basis of his argument for the origin of the *Hermetica* in Egyptian wisdom literature and for its subsequent evolution from relatively loose collections of maxims or sayings to smoother and more coherent literary forms. A major effect of Mahé's work on this text and the Nag Hammadi *Hermetica* is to confirm the views of other scholars, many of them Egyptologists, that Father Festugière was wrong to dismiss the Egyptian elements in the Greek and Latin treatises as mere ornament. The title of Fowden's recent book, which builds on Mahé and other work since Festugière while adding its own original analysis, affirms this transformation of the Greek into *The Egyptian Hermes*.[56]

Hermes and his readers

After Augustine's attack on Hermes in the *City of God*, the Latin West showed little interest in his writings until the twelfth century, when a revival of the Platonic tradition also reawakened curiosity about the Hermetic writings, especially the *Asclepius* in its relation to the *Timaeus*. Among the technical *Hermetica*, the important *Liber Hermetis* found a Latin translator in the fourth or fifth century, and in the ninth century Sedulius Scotus knew about the Hermetic *logos*, but his knowledge was indirect, either from Lactantius or perhaps from a fifth-century treatise *Against Five Heresies* that was still widely read in the twelfth century.[57] As in so many other respects, Moslems and other non-Europeans of late antiquity and the early middle ages outdid their Western contemporaries in preserving and extending the Hermetic tradition. As early as the second century, the Aramaic philosopher Bardaisan of Edessa seems to have been interested in Hermetic ideas. Around 600, a

Syriac collection of prophecies made Hermes one of its heroes and cited *C.H.* XIII, a significant anticipation of the respect accorded Hermes in that part of the world after the rise of Islam. Although the city of Harran in northwestern Mesopotamia fell to the armies of the Prophet by the mid-seventh century, its pagan inhabitants resisted conversion to Islam, as before they had refused Christianity. The Harranis, whose city was a great center of learning, took the name "Sabi'an" from the *Quran* as a term for a prophetic religion of the book tolerable by Islamic standards, and for their prophet they chose Hermes, whom they identified with the Quranic Idris and the biblical Enoch. Forced conversion intensified in the early ninth century, yet the Hermetic Sabi'ans held out until the middle of the eleventh century, producing several important scholars, of whom the greatest was Thabit ibn Qurrah in the ninth century. Noting that the end of Sabi'an Hermetism in Harran roughly coincided with the new Byzantine interest in Hermes represented by Michael Psellus, Walter Scott speculated that the dispersal of the Sabi'ans might have stimulated a Hermetic revival in Byzantium. In any case, the Sabi'an movement was a notable chapter in the history of Hermetism that foreshadowed a lively career for Hermes in the world of Islam, for it was not only the unorthodox who regarded him as a prophet.[58]

Although modern scholars know many Arabic *Hermetica*, no complete work corresponds to any surviving Greek text. Despite resentment of Hermes as a pagan god, Moslem authors covered themselves with his authority in their researches in astrology, alchemy and talismanic magic. Aristotle himself marched under a Hermetic banner; more than forty pseudo-Aristotelian titles on talismans and cosmology treated Hermes as the source of secret lore that the philosopher passed on to his student, Alexander. Al-Kindi, the first of the great Moslem Aristotelians, read Hermetic theology in the ninth century, as did the influential astrologer Abu Ma'shar. Alchemical works began to enter Islamic lands from Alexandria as early as the seventh century, even before the time of Jabir ibn Hayyan, a shadowy figure of the eighth and early ninth centuries often considered the founder of Arabic alchemy, and Hunain ibn Ishaq (809–73), the great translator of Greek and Syriac texts into Arabic. Jabir, the Latin Geber, is little more than a name attached to a large body of alchemical works, some quite late and many existing only in Latin. Another important alchemist was pseudo-Balinas; his name is a corruption of Apollonius, the fabled magician of Tyana, and he may have written in the ninth century. Building on an earlier work attributed to Hermes, the author

called Balinas composed a book on *The Secret of Creation* whose conclusion is an early version of the *Emerald Table*, a brief but famous collection of thirteen alchemical maxims which also appears in the Arabic works of Jabir. As notorious for its magic as the *Tabula smaragdina* was renowned for its alchemy, the eleventh-century *Goal of the Wise* is better known by the name of its Latin version, *Picatrix*, which also cites the authority of Hermes. Sometime between the eleventh and the thirteenth century appeared the Arabic work entitled *Hermes on the Reproof of the Soul*, a collection of "sentences" closer in its subject matter to the theoretical *Hermetica.*[59]

The *Book of Hermes on the Six Principles of Nature* is a Latin compilation made in England in the twelfth century but based ultimately on Arabic originals known to their compiler only in Latin versions; it deals with cosmogony, astronomy and meteorology and shows some resemblance to the *Asclepius*. Its author also used some of the Christian authorities active in twelfth-century Chartres, and its readers included other Latin authors known for their use of Hermetic texts. Another, late twelfthcentury work called itself the *Book of Propositions or Rules of Theology, said to be by the Philosopher Termegistus*. The second of its twenty-four propositions is a well-known maxim with an Empedoclean ring: "God is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere, whose circumference is nowhere." Such tantalizing ineffabilities made this work, also known as the *Book of Twenty Four Philosophers*, a favorite of Alexander of Hales, Thomas Aquinas, Bartholomew of England and Albertus Magnus, who mentioned Hermes in no less than twenty-three of his writings. In the twelfth century, Thierry of Chartres, Bernardus Silvestris, John of Salisbury and Alain de Lille took words or ideas from the *Asclepius* that do not appear in the *City of God*, as did Vincent of Beauvais and William of Auvergne in the thirteenth century. Other users of the *Asclepius*, such as Peter Abelard, probably went to Augustine or some other intermediary, though it should be noted that the seven manuscripts of the *Asclepius* used in the Budé edition come from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, evidently a period of considerable popularity for this long Hermetic text written in the language of Western Europe. An avid medieval student of the *Asclepius* was Thomas Bradwardine, who died in 1349; in his *De causa dei* he left readings from the *Asclepius* of value to its modern editors. Petrarch was another fourteenth-

century reader; he wrote a few words at the end of a Vatican manuscript of that century. [60]

In 1462 the young Marsilio Ficino had already begun his life's work of translating all of Plato into Latin when his patron, Cosimo de' Medici, interrupted this epochal task with something he found more momentous. Cosimo had obtained a fourteenth-century manuscript, now called A and owned by the Laurenziana in Florence, of C.H. I–XIV, so Ficino went quickly to work on it, soon producing a Latin version that still holds up to scrutiny if one considers the translator's textual limitations. Why the great Platonist and his patron thought it best to turn away from Plato and toward Hermes for a time becomes clear in his preface to the work he called a *Book on the Power and Wisdom of God, Whose Title is Pimander:*

> At the time when Moses was born flourished Atlas the astrologer, brother of the natural philosopher Prometheus and maternal grandfather of the elder Mercurius, whose grandson was Mercurius Trismegistus… . They called him Trismegistus or thrice-greatest because he was the greatest philosopher and the greatest priest and the greatest king… . Just as he outdid all philosophers in learning and keenness of mind, so also he surpassed every priest … in sanctity of life and reverence for the divine… . Among philosophers he first turned from physical and mathematical topics to contemplation of things divine, and he was the first to discuss with great wisdom the majesty of God, the order of demons and the transformations of souls. Thus, he was called the first author of theology, and Orpheus followed him, taking second place in the ancient theology. After Aglaophemus, Pythagoras came next in theological succession, having been initiated into rites of Orpheus, and he was followed by Philolaus, teacher of our divine Plato. In this way, from a wondrous line of six theologians emerged a single system of ancient theology, harmonious in every part, which traced its origins to Mercurius and reached absolute perfection with the divine Plato. Mercurius wrote many books pertaining to the knowledge of divinity, … often speaking not only as philosopher but as prophet… . He foresaw the ruin of the old religion, the rise of the new faith, the coming of Christ, the judgement to come, the resurrection of the race, the glory of the blessed and the torments of the damned.

Ficino later modified the succession of ancient wisdom by moving Zoroaster ahead of Hermes and dropping Philolaus, but the idea of a theological genealogy remained powerful with him and with other European intellectuals for the next two centuries.[61]

As mentioned above, he finished the job of translating his fourteen treatises in 1463 and saw them into print in 1471, two years after the first edition of the *Asclepius*. Ficino's *Pimander* remained the most influential presentation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* until the nineteenth century. By the mid-sixteenth century, it had seen two dozen editions and had stimulated vernacular versions in French, Dutch, Spanish and, most important, the Italian of Tommaso Benei, also completed in 1463. Adrien Turnebus

published the first Greek edition in 1554, using a complete manuscript of the *Corpus* and including Angelo Vergezio's *Suda* entry on Hermes as well as three pieces from Stobaeus. In 1574 François de Foix de Candale put out a new Greek text, actually the edition of Turnebus improved by Joseph Scaliger but without *C.H.* XVII and XVIII; it was accompanied by a Latin translation and included as a fifteenth treatise the *Suda* entry along with the Stobaean excerpts that Turnebus had published. Although this extra material dropped out in later editions, the numbering of the later treatises as XVI–XVIII continued, so that our *Corpus* has no fifteenth *logos*. Francesco Patrizi published his edition and translation of a drastically rearranged *Corpus* in 1591 in his *Nova de universis philosophia,* which made Hermes the proponent of a pious philosophy opposed to the impious Aristotle.[62]

In the meantime, beginning nearly a century before Patrizi's edition, commentators had begun to enlarge Europe's understanding of the Hermetic literature. The first was Lefèvre d'Etaples, whose 1494 commentary was a continuous synopsis tacked on to an edition of Ficino's *Pimander.* In 1505 Lefèvre divided his commentary into *argumenta* inserted between the various Latinized treatises, to which he added the *Asclepius* in its first joint publication with the *Corpus*. Around the same time, toward the end of the fifteenth century, Lodovico Lazzarelli prepared a Latin version of *C.H.* XVI, which the enterprising Symphorien Champier published in 1507; in 1494 Lazzarelli had written his own Christian version of the Hermetic philosophy, called the *Crater Hermetis*. Since Champier's work was so derivative, his interest in the *Hermetica* was a sure sign that Hermes was already fashionable in Europe. Francesco Giorgi made great and influential use of Hermes in his *De harmonia mundi* of 1525 and his *In sacram scripturam problemata* of 1536, and Agostino Steuco gave him a leading role in his version of the ancient theology, which Steuco called the "perennial philosophy." Long before Steuco, Giovanni Nesi interpreted the Hermetic succession in a novel way by putting Savonarola among his heirs. In Cracow, Hannibal Rossel filled six volumes with commentary on *C.H.* I–VII and the *Asclepius* in the 1580s; a 1630 edition of this monstrous exposition carried the last printing of a Greek *Corpus* (Patrizi's text) before the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, Guy Lefèvre de la Boderie, Philippe du Plessis Mornay, Giordano Bruno and many others spun out their own remarkable variations on Hermetic themes throughout the sixteenth century, raising Hermolatry to its

apex in the extravagant productions of Robert Fludd and Michael Maier in the early seventeenth century.[63]

The great doctrinal foe of Fludd and other Hermetists was Marin Mersenne, who joined Pierre Gassendi, René Descartes and Gabriel Naudé in speeding the demise of occultism as an acceptable occupation of educated people in Western Europe, but Hermes met his ablest enemy in a classical scholar, Isaac Casaubon. In 1614, in the course of a long polemic against the church history of Cesare Baronio, the Protestant Casaubon took issue with the notion that pagan seers had predicted Christ's coming. One of his targets was Hermes, in whose alleged writings he saw unmistakable linguistic proof of a much later date than the common tales of Egyptian origins could support. Especially in C.H. I and IV, Casaubon detected biblical, Jewish and Christian language and ideas, thus anticipating the findings of such modern experts as C.H. Dodd. He saw Greek diction too abstract to be early, Greek etymologies and puns impossible in a translation from Egyptian, historical references and doctrinal views that required a much later date than commonly supposed. Since Ficino's time, Renaissance thinkers had made Hermes a contemporary of Moses and the wellspring of *prisca theologia*, a tradition of gentile theology concurrent with and confirming biblical revelation. Turnebus, Matthaeus Beroaldus, Gilbert Génébrard and others had doubted this ancient ancestry by the latter part of the sixteenth century, but Casaubon was the first to make a strong and dramatic case for "Pseudomercurius" as the figment of a half-Christian forger. Athanasius Kircher, Ralph Cudworth and some others shrugged off Casaubon's arguments, but most seem to have been convinced – Protestants especially. By the eighteenth century, Casaubon's debunking of Hermetic antiquity had entered canonical accounts of intellectual history by way of the influential volumes of Jacob Brucker.[64]

The learned Casaubon did not quite exterminate the thrice greatest Hermes; the Hermetic engine sputtered on through the seventeenth century, slowly losing momentum. Isaac Newton used the ancient theology motif in his *Principia* and was still working at Hermetic alchemy in the early 1690s, though beyond the general notion of a Hermetic doxography there is no reason to connect the *Corpus* as we know it with Newton's physics or theology. In 1730 the Chevalier Ramsay found proof of Egyptian monotheism in the *Hermetica*, and in his *Pantheon Aegyptiorum* of 1750–2, P.E. Jablonski appealed not to the actual *Corpus* but to his own reconstructions of

books written by priests of Hermes and resembling the *Vedas* of their Indian counterparts. John Everard published his English version of Patrizi's text in 1650, launching a translation still reprinted in the late nineteenth century. But after 1630, no new or reprinted Greek editions appeared until Parthey's *Poemander* of 1854.[65] Before that time, the last major contribution to Hermetic scholarship was a German translation and commentary prepared by Dieterich Tiedemann in 1781. Some modern scholars have found Tiedemann's work valuable for editorial purposes, and others have admired the 1866 French translation and commentary by Louis Ménard. Ménard's version, along with a spate of English translations by J.D. Chambers in 1882, W.W. Wescott in 1893–4 and G.R.S. Mead in 1906, signaled a renewed interest in these ancient texts, much of it provoked by the theosophical movements of the late nineteenth century. The Theosophical Society in London published Mead's translation, part of a diligent three-volume study that can still be used – with caution.[66]

If one cause of today's curiosity about Hermes can be found in the occultist speculations of the previous century, a contrary approach to the *Hermetica* grew out of the high and serious scholarship of *Religionswissenschaft*, a much different product of the same era. Modern Hermetic studies began just after the turn of the century with the work of Richard Reitzenstein, who moved in 1914 from Strasbourg to Göttingen, where the "history of religion school" had come together a few decades earlier. Aided by such authorities as Wilhelm Bousset, the Göttingen program of studying the Old and New Testaments in their cultural surroundings had obvious appeal to a scholar of Reitzenstein's tastes and talents. In 1904 he had published his *Poimandres: Studies on Greco-Egyptian and Early Christian Literature*, which included the first competent critical edition along modern lines of *C.H.* I, XIII and XVI–XVIII. Heavy with references to seldom studied sources, such as the Greek Magical Papyri, Reitzenstein's *Poimandres* defined and proposed solutions for problems that still confront students of the *Hermetica.* He argued, for example, that the *Corpus* proved the existence of a Hermetic religious community which used its treatises in their worship, a claim that still excites controversy. Introducing his analysis of *C .H.* XIII, he maintained that

> the founder of the congregation (*Gemeinde*) here is clearly Hermes, the universal god of revelation in this literature… . The *logoi genikoi* of Hermes to Tat serve as holy scriptures… . The characterization

of Poimandres as a fully individual god has lost its meaning… . The congregation has a holy scripture, the sayings of Poimandres.[67]

Most provocative, however, was his conclusion that the religious context of the *Corpus* was Egyptian. Thaddeus Zielinski quickly rebutted this "Egyptomania" in two articles (1905–6) that sought to restore the *Hermetica* to a Greek context, dividing them into Peripatetic, Platonist and pantheist sets fitted to the appropriate niches of Hellenic thought.[68] Zielinski's tidy taxonomy displeased Wilhelm Kroll; he agreed in his 1912 Pauly-Wissowa article on Hermes that the *Corpus* was Greek, but he needed a grand theme to unify the treatises, and he found it in the quest for salvation. His student, Josef Kroll, pursued related lines of research in a large study first published in 1914 on *The Teachings of Hermes Trismegistos*, which located the roots of Hermetism in Posidonius, the Middle Stoics and Philo, all suitably Hellenic, but detected no Christianity in the *Corpus*.

Bousset quickly answered Kroll's *Teachings* in an enormous review running to nearly sixty dense pages that criticized the author for letting the pendulum swing so far from Reitzenstein's Egyptian thesis that the *only* sources possible were Greek, a view that Bousset found unfalsifiable, and he corrected Kroll's emphasis on Stoic philosophy in a memorable sentence: "The *Hermetica* belong to the history of piety, not philosophy."[69] Seeing the treatises as unphilosophical and unsystematic, Bousset arranged them in three groups – monist, dualist and mixed – and he identified a Babylonian rather than a Greek provenance for the dualist hope to escape fate through salvation. In 1901 he had written an article on "The Heavenly Journey of the Soul" that traced the soul-voyage theme to Iran, and when he rejected Reitzenstein's Egyptian thesis in a1905 review, he suggested an "oriental" lineage for the primal man of C.H. I. His major work of 1907, *Main Problems of Gnosis*, explored the eastern sources of Gnosticism, settling on a Greek reception of Iranian influence as the key ingredient. In later years, Hans Jonas and others were to extend Bousset's analysis of Gnosticism, but by 1913 Eduard Norden had already used Reitzenstein's *Poimandres* as evidence for a pre-Christian Gnosticism in his *Agnostos Theos*.[70]

After his move to Göttingen in 1914, Reitzenstein changed his mind about the Egyptian Hermes and decided on Iran as the homeland of distinctive Hermetic doctrine. In general terms, this shift of interpretation was already clear in his *Iranian Salvation-Mystery* of 1921, but a detailed application to

the *Hermetica* awaited the 1926 *Studies on Ancient Syncretism from Iran and Greece*. 1927 saw the third edition of his influential *Hellenistic Mystery Religions*, which, while promoting the Iranian thesis, also softened the case for a *Poimandres-Gemeinde* by treating *C.H.* XIII as a *Lese-Mysterium* or "literary mystery," a text meant to have cultic effects without actual cultic practice. Reitzenstein had published another Greek text of C.H. I in his 1926 *Studies*, prefacing it with the comment that "in my notes I can use the new edition of the *Corpus* by Walter Scott … but for my text I can take nothing from it. Whether the long commentary that is promised can even partially justify the completely reckless arrangement of the text remains to be seen."[71] At this point, Reitzenstein had seen only the first volume (1924) of Scott's *Hermetica*, which contains an introduction, the texts and the translations. Two thick volumes of commentary followed in 1926, but Scott's death in the previous year delayed publication of the fourth volume of *testimonia* and indices until 1936, when it appeared with extensive additions by A.S. Ferguson. Scholars have generally confirmed Reitzenstein's harsh verdict on the text, which is a jungle of excisions, interpolations and transpositions so distantly related to the manuscripts that Scott's translation can only be regarded as a translation of Scott, not of the Hermetic authors. Apart from the text and translation, however, Scott's volumes remain indispensable, and some of his textual insights were brilliantly right, others brilliantly wrong. His commentary is copious and learned, and his collection of testimonies an invaluable resource.

Around the same time when Oxford published Scott's first three volumes, Arthur D. Nock was beginning work on the manuscripts of the *Corpus* and the *Asclepius* that would lead in 1945 to the first two of four Budé volumes of *Hermetica*. Nock prepared the texts, the apparatus and the general introductory material; translations, notes and specific introductions to the Greek treatises were the task of his collaborator, Father Festugière. Nock's preface also lists other scholars – A.S. Ferguson, F. Cumont, H.-C. Puech, B. Einarson, C.H. Dodd and others – whose suggestions appear in the notes.[72] The Stobaeus *Excerpts* and other fragments in the third and fourth volumes, entirely Festugière's responsibility, appeared in 1954, with a very long introduction. Meanwhile, Festugière published the first volume of his monumental *Revelation of Hermes Trismegistus* in 1944; the next three volumes appeared in 1949, 1953 and 1954, and the latest edition of the whole set was complete in 1981, a year before the author's death. Some

earlier articles on Hermes were collected in 1967 in *Hermetism and Pagan Mysteries*; others appeared in different collections, while some remain scattered through the journals – a wide scattering, since the bibliography published in the 1984 *Mémorial* for Festugière lists 350 items. Despite growing interest in the *Hermetica* after the second world war, no one cared to attempt a major study before Mahé and Fowden, beginning in the late seventies. The Budé edition and the weight of Festugière's massive erudition ruled the field for almost thirty years.[73]

Festugière's analysis of the *Hermetica*, accepted in most respects by Nock, remained the prevailing orthodoxy until the last decade or so. Reitzenstein's Egyptian thesis had long been a dead letter, so it is not entirely surprising that Egyptians speaking Hermetic lines failed to move Festugière to look anywhere but Greece for the background of the *Corpus*. Introducing the Budé edition, Nock wrote that the *Hermetica*

> contain very few Egyptian elements beyond the personnel. The ideas are those of popular Greek philosophic thought in a very eclectic form, with that mixture of Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism that was then so widespread. Here and there appear traces of Judaism and probably also of a religious literature whose ultimate source is Iran. By contrast, there is no clear evidence of Christianity or Neoplatonism.[74]

Festugière spoke more forcefully against Egyptian origins, finding the "Egyptian element hardly apparent … except in the interlocutors… . [This] local color … these touches of the exotic have little more importance than ibises or palm trees in a fresco at Pompeii."[75] Egypt was mere literary artifice in the *Hermetica*, which besides attained no doctrinal coherence, preached no single Hermetic gospel.

> The *Corpus* … presents two incompatible doctrines that entail two precisely opposed attitudes. In one … the world is penetrated by divinity, therefore beautiful and good. In the other the world is essentially evil, not the work of God or, in any case, the First God … [who is] infinitely removed above all matter … hidden in the mystery of his being… . Notions so diverse … cannot lead to the same mode of action but must result in two antagonistic moralities. It is therefore absurd to attribute them simultaneously to the same religious sect.[76]

Festugière found the *Hermetica* not only incoherent but also diffuse in their incoherence.

> If by "Hermetism" one means a somewhat coherent doctrine, a doctrine of salvation of some kind, the word applies only to a small number of works … [but] if … one means only a certain attitude of piety, a

certain turn of mind that lies in bending every philosophical inquiry in the direction of piety and knowledge of God, the word can apply to almost all [the theoretical *Hermetica]*.[77]

If there was no Hermetic doctrine, there could be no Hermetic church, which "obliges one to regard the Hermetic writings as a purely literary phenomenon, and not as 'liturgies' for a confraternity of initiates." In confirmation of this interpretation, Festugière found "no trace … of particular ceremonies for the faithful of Hermes, nothing resembling the sacraments of Gnostic sects, neither* baptism nor communion nor confession… . No clergy at all: no evidence of hierarchical organization or degrees of initiation."[78] Furthermore, he complained that

those who have spoken of a church have only considered a selection of *logoi* where the mythic aspect predominates … but what stands out in a much larger number of writings is the scholastic aspect… . Hermes and his disciples behave like master and pupils … dealing with scholastic problems … as one would in Alexandria, fatherland of Hermetism, under the Empire … joining pious homilies to these academic exercises.[79]

Thus, in Festugière's view, it was not the odor of sanctity but the smell of the classroom that permeated the *Corpus*. If the intensities of religious cult were missing, so were the rites of the magician. Defining his categories of "popular" and "learned" *Hermetica*, he conceded that

these two groups are not unrelated. Thus, there are traces of astrology in learned Hermetism, traces of alchemy in the learned treatise entitled *Korē Kosmou*. … On the other hand, two writings of the alchemist Zosimus … obviously come under the influence of Gnostic and mystical speculations of learned Hermetism. Nonetheless, these interferences do not affect the essential character of either group, and the distinction between them remains clear. Their sole point in common … is that they all present themselves as revealed writings – revealed by Hermes Trismegistus.[80]

Although on some occasions he muffled his depreciation of the religious motives of the Hermetic authors, he generally regarded their works as expressions of a rather vague and contradictory piety without real roots in Egypt, an eclectic spirituality planted in the intellectual commonplaces of the Greek-speaking world of late antiquity. It was natural that scholars who came after Father Festugière found reasons to differ – on large matters and small – with the monumental deposit of Hermetic studies that he bequeathed to them, and it goes without saying that all subsequent work on the *Hermetica* bears the stamp of his enormous learning and deep insight.

The discovery of Hermetic writings among the *Nag Hammadi Codices* just after the end of the war was to make Festugière's views untenable in several respects, but the reversal was a long time coming. Beginning in 1956, Jean Doresse published several articles that revealed the new Coptic *Hermetica* to the learned world, and in 1960 an English translation of his work on *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* helped spread the news. In 1966 Martin Krause clarified the precise number and identities of the new texts, and in 1971 he and Pahor Labib published a text and translation of *NHC* VI; an English version edited by Douglass Parrott appeared first in 1979. Three years after the Krause-Labib edition, Mahé began his pioneering studies of the Coptic and, later, the Armenian *Hermetica.* Mahé concluded that the Coptic text of *Asclepius* 21–9 (*NHC* VI.8) was closer than the Latin version to the Greek original and that its teachings on the soul's ascent and judgment required an Egyptian as well as a Hellenistic background. In particular, he noted that certain passages of the *Corpus* paralleled in the *Asclepius* reveal a gnomic or "sentence" form in parts of the latter. His 1976 translation of the Armenian *Definitions* heightened the significance of this insight, for he came to understand this new treatise as a collection of "sentences" and as a model for what he took to be the basic form of a Hermetic *logos*. He argued that Hermetic sentences derived from similar elements in ancient Egyptian wisdom literature, especially the genre called "Instructions" that reached back to the Old Kingdom, and he suggested that in the well-known gnomic form they found a Greek vehicle ready made for a Hellenic audience. Two seemingly opposed features of the *Hermetica* – doctrinal disunity and uniform phraseology – made sense together if treatises were built up from the same sentence material embedded in different bodies of commentary. As they evolved, treatises that accreted smaller or larger quantities of commentary would become more or less fluent in form as the gnomic material faded into a larger framework of interpretation. Mahé decided that the Gnostic content of the *Hermetica* is a secondary feature asociated with commentary, a later overgrowth distinguishable from a primary core of Greco-Egyptian sentences formulated before Gnostic ideas had developed.[81]

So short a summary naturally fails to do justice to the range and subtlety of Mahé's work, which touches our understanding of the *Hermetica* at many more points than I can describe here; not the least of them for present purposes are his editorial correction of the Latin *Asclepius* and his analysis

of its relation to its Coptic analog. But in a broader sense, the greatest impact of his two volumes on *Hermes in Upper Egypt* is to re-establish an Egyptian ancestry for the *Hermetica*, three quarters of a century after Reitzenstein's "Egyptomania." The contemporary effort to reassert an Egyptian ancestry began in 1949 when Bruno Strieker published a two-page report in *Mnemosyne* on a larger work that never found its way to print. After Strieker, several Egyptologists and other scholars – Doresse, Krause, François Daumas, Philippe Derchain, Serge Sauneron, J.D. Ray, B.R. Rees and others – provided new arguments and evidence for a revised Egyptian thesis, which took hold only after Mahé. For obvious reasons, perhaps, proponents of Christian and Jewish connections had a better hearing from early on. C.H. Dodd published his impressive book on *The Greeks and the Bible* in 1935, devoting many of its pages to an exhaustive search for traces of the Septuagint and other documents of Hellenistic Judaism in the *Corpus*. His later work (1950) on John's Gospel also gave considerable attention to the *Hermetica*, which had been well explored by students of the Old and New Testaments even before the publications of Carl Heinrici and Hans Windisch in 1918. Marc Philonenko, Birger Pearson, William Grese and others have continued to investigate biblical and Jewish connections in the *Hermetica*, though the possibility of influence running *from* Hermetic texts *to* Christian scripture has seldom tempted students of the New Testament.

The most recent English study to treat the *Hermetica* in depth is the book by Garth Fowden mentioned above at several points, *The Egyptian Hermes*, published in 1986. Fowden recognizes the value of Mahé's work but believes that he overestimates the importance of the sentence form and of native Egyptian influence, claiming that

> neither of the extreme positions occupied by Festugière and Mahé are likely to be justifiable, since we are dealing with a syncretistic culture whose elements … were not easily separable… . [I]t should not surprise us to find that the Hermetists combined openness to … Hellenism with a deep, sometimes even aggressive awareness of their own roots in Egypt. Indeed, our best evidence for this comes in … the philosophical Hermetists, [who] … had far fewer direct links with the Egyptian past than did the technical Hermetists.[82]

In the final pages of his stimulating book, Fowden concludes that "Hermetism was a characteristic product of the Greek-speaking milieu in Egypt… . And yet … [it] was part of a wider Mediterranean whole … enjoyfing] wide dissemination in the Roman empire."[83] Despite important differences with

Mahé, Fowden's analysis points in the same general direction, toward restoring the *Hermetica* to a Greco-*Egyptian* setting and moving them beyond the catechetical formulas of the schoolroom to wider conversations open in late antiquity to those seeking salvation in myriad ways – theoretical and technical, contemplative and pragmatic, religious and magical, literary and cultic, Gnostic, Greek and Egyptian.

After Festugière and before Mahé and Fowden, perhaps the most widely read book on Hermes was not about late antiquity; the Renaissance was the period studied by Frances Yates in *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, published in 1964. From earlier works of P.O. Kristeller, Eugenio Garin, D.P. Walker and others, Renaissance specialists already knew the importance of the *Hermetica* in post-medieval European thought, but it was Yates who made Hermes truly prominent once again for students of early modern intellectual history. Accepting Festugière's analysis and calling "the critical and historical problems of the Hermetic literature … irrelevant [because] … they would have been entirely unknown to Ficino and his readers," Yates made "the great Egyptian illusion" and the chronological misconceptions eventually resolved by Casaubon major themes of her study, which focuses on figures of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from Ficino through Bruno and somewhat beyond.[84] Whether the real setting and dating of the Hermetic tradition in late antiquity are, in fact, irrelevant to its reception in the Renaissance is an interesting hermeneutic question that cannot be answered here. In any case and for many other reasons, Yates's views on the *Hermetica* became famous for some, notorious for others, especially when, in a 1968 article, she made Hermes a major figure in the preliminaries to the scientific revolution, just two years after J.E. McGuire and P.M. Rattansi had connected Newton's physics with the ancient theology theme so closely associated with Hermes. Yates also detected Hermetic influence in major figures of the Renaissance literary canon, including Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare. Needless to say, the *Hermetica* soon became required reading for many students of early modern thought and letters whose interests were otherwise quite far from the fascinating puzzles of Hellenistic, Roman and Egyptian religion and philosophy.[85]

A new English *Hermetica*

Indeed, my own wish to undertake a new English version of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius* arose from just these circumstances. As a student of early modern works on philosophy, religion and magic (along with the attendant secondary literature) that have or might have Hermetic connections, it became clear to me that contemporary readers of the relevant ancient and early modern documents were often befuddled by the absence of a reliable English version of the *Hermetica* usable by persons unfamiliar with the languages and conventions of classical philology – hence this translation, with due and sincere apologies to the classicists who will doubtless notice blunders and omissions invisible to me. Scott's four volumes are still in print, but his translation is unreliable because it reflects his idiosyncratic text. For readers of French and, obviously, for those who can handle the Greek and Latin, the Budé edition of Nock with Festugière's translation remains indispensable, even though knowledge of the text and its cultural context has progressed in the last several decades. Anyone who intends to spend a long time with the *Hermetica* should certainly get to know both the Budé and Scott, even though neither is particularly accessible to a wide readership. As far as I know, no English translation of the whole *Corpus* and the *Asclepius* has appeared since the Budé edition, which must be the starting point for any sound understanding of the Hermetic treatises. Some older English translations remain in print, such as *The Divine Pymander* of J.D. Chambers, which is impenetrably literal, and others are readily available in libraries, such as the version of G.R.S. Mead, whose good sense of the Greek and Latin must be watched for theosophical motivations. But the best reason not to use these older English versions is that they are based on pre-Budé texts.

My translation includes the seventeen Greek treatises of the *Corpus* and the Latin *Asclepius*, omitting the Stobaeus *Excerpts*, the Coptic *Hermetica*, the Armenian *Definitions* and the Vienna fragments. My motives for this selection are two: the weaker one is my primary interest in the texts I have translated, the others being less important for the period of my specialization; the stronger motive has to do with time and space, which forbid my including these other texts, whose translation and annotation would fill another volume of this size. The Nag Hammadi *Hermetica* are readily available to English readers in the *Nag Hammadi Library* mentioned above; only Stobaeus, the Armenian *Definitions* and the Vienna fragments are less accessible. Not

wishing to make the best the enemy of the good, I offer this translation of those texts that I could produce in the time available to me.

Needless to say, the intention of this introduction and of the notes to each of the treatises is not to settle questions of interpretation debated among the learned for the last several centuries. This introduction is no more than a general orientation for those who may not yet know the *Hermetica*, and the purposes of the notes are likewise limited: first, to support the translation by indicating special textual or linguistic difficulties; second, to provide cross-references between the various treatises as well as citations of other primary documents so that one ancient text can illuminate another; and third, to provide a point of entry to the vast bibliography that has accumulated on the *Hermetica*. Neither the notes nor the fuller references in the bibliography aim to be comprehensive, but I have purposely included many works that may seem obsolete, not wishing to decide whether some insight of a past scholar will or will not assist future readers. Because their bibliographical burden is large, the notes, especially in the early treatises, may seem a bit cumbersome. I have also tried to include references to newer work, paying special attention to such collections as Betz's *Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* and Layton's *Gnostic Scriptures* that have opened recondite materials to a wide English readership.

The English versions published here are translations of the Greek and Latin of the Budé edition; any conscious departures from this edition are indicated in the notes, especially those corrections that have appeared after Nock prepared his texts, e.g., in Festugière's *Révélation* and in Mahé's work on the Coptic *Asclepius*. I have also referred to textual information from the editions of Scott and Reitzenstein, but references to their texts are generally not distinguished from the indications in Nock's apparatus. The following symbols, parallel to those used in the Budé text, alert the reader as indicated:

angled brackets	⟨ ⟩: insertion of a word or words
square brackets	[ ]: removal of a word or words
pointed brackets	{ }: a word or words regarded as unintelligible or otherwise problematic
ellipsis	…: a lacuna or gap in the text

Although I have tried to translate the texts, especially their technical terminology, as consistently as possible, requirements of readability, intelligibility and accuracy have obviously often prevented this, but such problems are generally indicated in the notes. All Greek is transliterated, with *ē* and *ō* representing *ēta* and *ōmega*.

The bibliography that follows is arranged in alphabetical order according to abbreviations used in the notes for articles, collections of articles and books. Some bibliographical entries will themselves contain abbreviations, especially in the case of articles published in conference collections or similar formats. Other special abbreviations (e.g., *C.H.*, *S.H.*, *A.D., NHC*, *PGM*, LXX, LSJ, PW, *OLD*) are also explained. Because nonspecialist readers may be curious about the *Hermetica*, I have not used standard abbreviations for technical journals or for ancient sources; the latter are spelled out, usually in English, in the notes.

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[1] On Thoth, see below, note on *C.H.* I. Title; notes to the introduction have been kept to a minimum, but notes to the texts contain fuller documentation with references keyed to the bibliography that follows the introduction; the bibliography explains abbreviations.

[2] This quotation (and all other material on Hor of Sebennytos) comes from Ray, *Archive*, pp. 14–20, 73–80, 117–24, 132–6, 149, 159–60; see also *C.H.* I. Title. Unless otherwise noted, translations from Greek and Latin (but not Egyptian, Coptic or Armenian) as well as modern languages are my own throughout the volume.

[3] *C.H.* I. Title.

[4] Waddell, *Manetho*, pp. vii-xxviii, 14–17, 208–11; Helck, *KP*; Laqueur, PW XIV/1; Adler, *Time,* pp. 1–14, 24–42, 55–71, 172–5; cf. Fowden, *EH*, pp. 29–31, 53–7, 214.

[5] See notes on the titles of *C.H.* I, XI, XIII, XVI and the *Asclepius*; also *C.H.* II. 1, IV.3, X.23.

[6] Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.1.260–1.

[7] Festugière, *HMP*, pp. 30–2; FR I, 89–308.

[8] Bowman, *Egypt,* pp. 22–9, 235–6; what follows in this section is taken primarily from Bowman's recent book and from Lewis, *Life;* from the many relevant works in the bibliography see also especially: Cumont, *Egypte*; Fraser, *Alexandria;* Fowden, *EH;* and Lewis, *Egypt.*

[9] Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 31–7; Polybius, *Histories* 29.27 cited in Lewis, *Life,* pp. 9–14.

[10] Bowman, *Egypt,* pp. 41–6; Lewis, *Life,* pp. 30–1.

[11] Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 46–52.

[12] Ibid., pp. 58–81; Lewis, *Life*, pp. 16–19, 36–7, 48.

[13] Bowman, *Egypt,* pp. 13–19, 57, 141; Lewis, *Life,* pp. 15, 25–7, 107–16, 124–33.

[14] Juvenal, *Satire* 15.1–4, trans. R. Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 175; Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 129, 157–64; Lewis, *Life*, pp. 34–5, 59–62.

[15] Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 122–9; Lewis, *Life,* pp. 18–44, 186.

[16] Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 30–1; Lewis, *Life*, pp. 196–207.

[17] Inscription cited in Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 168–70, 179; Lewis, *Life*, pp. 84, 91–2.

[18] Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 168–80; Lewis, *Life*, pp. 15, 87–94; Ferguson, *Religions*, p. 74.

[19] Papyrus certificate cited in Fox, *Pagans*, pp. 419–23, 450–62; Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 190–8; Lewis, *Life*, pp. 100–2.

[20] *Suda I*. 433.4 (Adler II, pp. 641–2); Cook, *Zeus*, III, pp. 324–33; below, n. 29.

[21] Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 3–13, 34–43, 60, 461–71, 487–96; Dodds, *Irrational*, pp. 283–99; (1961), pp. 694–701; Hadot (1978), pp. 703–19.

[22] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, pp. 392–6.

[23] Fox, *Pagans*, pp. 168–209.

[24] For the inscription, see Fox, *Pagans*, pp. 169–71, also 195–8; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 7–11; Hadot (1978), pp. 711–14; Dodds (1961), pp. 694–7; Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 105–6,132–3.

[25] Guthrie, *Orpheus*, pp. 69–70, 256–7; Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 132–3; West, *Orphic Poems*, pp. 1–26, 68, 227–8, 259–60.

[26] Linforth, *Orpheus*, pp. 180–9; Guthrie, *Orpheus*, pp. 255–9; West, *Orphic Poems*, pp. 1, 26–37; below, pp. xxxii-xl.

[27] Guthrie, *Orpheus*, pp. 72–6, 137–42; West, *Orphic Poems*, pp. 68–75, 100–11, 138–9, 174–5, 203, 223–9, 246–64.

[28] *Sibylline Oracles* 3.635–56; Collins, *Oracles*, pp. 332, 355–6; Parke, *Sibyls*, pp. 1–15; Russell, *Jews*, pp. 36, 105; below, notes on *Asclep*. 24.

[29] *Sibylline Oracles* 12.187–205; Collins, *Oracles*, pp. 380–3, 390, 443; Bartlett, *Jews*, pp. 39–41; above, n. 20.

[30] Vergil, *Eclogue* 4.4; Parke, *Sibyls,* pp. 14, 51–64, 72–93, 137–47, 190–212.

[31] Parke, *Sibyls,* pp. 16–18, 144–5, 152–67.

[32] Augustine, *Against Faustus* 13.1, 2, 15, 17 (Migne, *PL* 42: 281–2, 290, 292); *City of God* 18.23; both are cited in Parke, *Sibyls,* pp. 169–70.

[33] Scott I, 1–2; Festugière, *HMP*, p. 30; FR II, 1–2; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 21–2; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 1–4, 140–1, 161–213.

[34] Festugière, *HMP,* pp. 50–69; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 22; for the *Excerpts* of Stobaeus, see NF III–IV; for the Nag Hammadi *Hermetica*, see Parrott, *NHC VI*, pp. 1–7, 341–51, and Robinson, *Library*, pp. 321–38; for the Armenian *Definitions,* see Mahé, *Hermes* II, pp. 320–406; and for the Vienna fragments, see Mahé (1984).

[35] Clement, *Miscellanies* 6.4; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 57–9.

[36] Festugière, *HMP,* pp. 30–1 ; FR I, 89–186; Fraser, *Alexandria,* I, pp. 435–9; Tester, *Astrology,* pp. 21–2; W. Gundel, *Texte;* idem, *Dekane;* Fowden, *EH,* pp. 91–5.

[37] Festugière, *HMP,* pp. 30–2; FR I, 217–82; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 89–91, 120–6; Wellman (1928), pp. 1–6; cf. Fraser, *Alexandria,* I, pp. 440–4; also: Multhauf, *Chemistry,* pp. 82–5, 92–116; Forbes, *Technology,* I, pp. 131–42; Jackson, *Zosimos; C.H.* 1.15.

[38] Kamaikis, *Kyraniden,* pp. 1–5, 14–21, 112, 188, 244, 300, 309; Festugière, *HMP,* p. 32; FR I, 187–216; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 87–9; Wellman, *Koiraniden*; above, n. 37.

[39] Betz, *Papyri,* pp. xi-xxii, xli-lviii, 142; Festugière, *HMP,* pp. 31–2; FR I, 283–308; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 168–73.

[40] Betz, *Papyri*, pp. 107–9; *C.H.* 1.31–2, IV.4, XIII.8, 17–21 ; *Asclep*. 41; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 21–2; cf. Nock (1925), p. 131; idem (1939), pp. 300–1; also Scott I, 1, describing the technical *Hermetica* as "another class of documents … concerning astrology, magic, alchemy, and kindred forms of pseudo-science … [which] differ fundamentally [from the theoretical treatises]… . The two classes of writers agreed in ascribing what they wrote to Hermes, but in nothing else… . They were of different mental calibre… . We are therefore justified in … ignoring the masses of rubbish which fall under [this] … head." Discussing Albrecht Dieterich's pioneering seminar of 1905 on the magical papyri, Betz (op. cit., pp. xliii, li) recalls a time when "magic was so utterly despised by historians and philologists that the announcement of the seminar did not mention the word 'magic.' … How far the dislike … could go is illustrated by a remark made by Ulrich von Wilamowitz- Moellendorf: 'I once heard a well-known scholar complain that these papyri were found because they deprived antiquity of the noble splendor of classicism.'" The word magic (*mageia*) occurs once (*S.H.* XXIII.68) in the Greek and Latin *Hermetica,* and *sumpatheia,* another key term of magical theory, appears once in the *Corpus* itself, at VIII.5.

[41] Fowden, *EH,* pp. xvi, 76–9; compare Festugière, *Evangile,* pp. 281–328, esp. p. 327, and *HMP,* pp. 23–7, 79–87, with Aune (1980), pp. 1507–16, 1536, 1557; Copenhaver (1988), pp. 79–90; for passages in the *Corpus* and the *Asclepius* more closely related than most to the theory and practice of magic, see: C.H. 1.9, 11, 13, 25, 27; II.6; III.2; VIII.5; X.14, 22–3; XII.15–16, XVI; *Asclep*. 2–6, 23–4, 37–8.

[42] *C.H.* 1.5, note on 'spirit'; Sambursky, *Physics,* pp. 1–7, 21–3, 29–44; Lloyd, *Science,* pp. 27–31, 82–4, 138–42.

[43] NF III, xxxix, 39, 43, n. 33; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 98–100.

[44] NF III, ccxix-ccxxviii, IV, 22; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 116–18; notes on *Asclep*. 23–4, 37–8; above, n. 40, on the words *mageia* and *sumpatheia*.

[45] FR I, 240–7, 260–82; Jackson, *Zosimos*, pp. 24–5, 44; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 120–6, 144–5, 151–2.

[46] *NHC* VI.6.56.12–22, 61.4–17; cf. 57.5–25, 63.9–14; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 97–9; note on *C.H.* XIII.Title.

[47] *NHC* VI.6.61.4–22; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 103–5; below, nn. 76–7.

[48] Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.4.267–5.268; *Asclep*. 37–8; Betz, *Papyri*, pp. 48–54; Fowden, *EH,* p. 82–8, 140–5, 168–71.

[49] NF I, xi–xii, xviii–xix, xlix; Scott IV, 244–6; above, nn. 40–41; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 9, 117–18.

[50] *Suda* E.3038 (Adler II, pp. 413–4); NF I, xxv; Ficino, *Opera*, pp. 1836–7, 1857–8; Gentile, *Catalogo*, pp. 37–8; Scott IV, 235; below, n. 61.

[51] NF I, xlviii–li, III, i–xii; Scott I, 82–6, IV, 243–6; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 7–9.

[52] Cyril, *Against Julian* 548B–C; *NHC* VI.6.63.2–3, 7a.65.14; NF I, xxxix–xl; Scott IV, 194–5; Mahé (1984), pp. 51, 54, 58, 60; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 4–6, 97–100, 200; Fox, *Pagans,* pp. 414–5; for the terms *genikoi* ("general"), *diexodikoi* ("detailed"), *exodiakoi* ("guiding"), *exotica* ("foreign") or *exoterica* ("popular") or perhaps *diexodica* ("detailed"), see: *C.H.* V. 1 ; X.l, 7; XIII.l; XIV. 1; *Asclep.* 1; *S.H.* III.l; VI.l; *V.F.* B.6.

[53] *Asclep.* 41; *NHC* VI.7.63.33–65.7; *PGM* III.591–609 (Betz, pp. 3–4); Athenagoras, *Petition* 28.6; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.10.48; Scott I, 87–8, 92, IV, 1–6; NF I, xxxvii; Mahé, *Hermes* I, 160–7; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 4–6, 10–11, 84–6, 162, 171, 216–17.

[54] Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 1.1.1–2, 2.5–6; 8.1.260–1, 2.262, 3.265–4.267; Porphyry, *Life* 16; Scott I, 92, 96, IV, 28–103; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 201–5.

[55] NF I, V, xxxviii, II, 264–6; Scott I, 8–10, 29, 54–5, 61–81, 92–6, IV, 9–27, IVF, xvi; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 8, 11, 205–10; Ogilvie, *Lactantius*, p. xxx; Robinson, *Library*, p. 16; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 5–7, 22–3, II, 25–6, 47–8, 54–62, 70–1, 80, 111–12, 278, 327, 409; other evidence in the texts bearing on dating is discussed in the notes.

[56] Robinson, *Library*, pp. 22–4; Berliner Arbeitskreis (1973), pp. 53–7; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 7–15, 22–3, II, 33–40, 275–6, 314, 320–8; Fowden, *EH,* pp. 4–5, 170–4; *C.H.* XVI. Title; above, n. 34; below, nn. 81–3.

[57] NF I, xli, II, 266; Scott I, 97; Gundel, *Texte*, pp. 10–11; Siniscalco (1967), pp. 109–14; Gregory (1988), pp. 56–79.

[58] Drijvers (1969–70); Brock (1983), pp. 203–10, 237, 240–1; Scott I, 97–111.

[59] FR I, 384–400 (appendix by L. Massignon on "Arab Hermetic Literature"); Scott IV, 248–50, 277–81; Ruska, *Tabula*, pp. 1–5, 48–58, 107–67; Plessner (1954), pp. 45–59; Burnett (1986), pp. 84–97; idem (1988b), pp. 398–400; Lory (1988), pp. 100–9; Multhauf, *Chemistry*, pp. 119–31; Bardenhewer, *Libellum.*

[60] NF II, 259–60, 263, 266–75; Baeumker (1927), pp. 198–208; Silverstein (1955), pp. 217–40; Siniscalco (1967), pp. 111–14; Sturlese (1980), pp. 633–4; Gregory (1988), pp. 75–9; Lapidge (1988), pp. 103–4; Burnett (1988a), p. 171.

[61] Ficino, *Opera*, p. 1836; Allen, *Philebus,* pp. 50–1; (1988), pp. 110–11; Garin, *Ermetismo,* pp. 15–20; Hankins, *Plato,* II, pp. 460–4; above, n. 50.

[62] Scott I, 16–20, 31–40; Dagens (1951), pp. 21–6; Dannenfeldt (1960), pp. 137–42; Yates, *Bruno*, pp. 169–73; Allen (1988), pp. 111–13; Vasoli (1988a), pp. 139–45; *C.H.* XVI.Title.

[63] Kristeller, *Studies,* pp. 221–57; idem (1960), pp. 3–25; Dannenfeldt (1960), pp. 142–51; Dagens (1961), pp. 5–13; Yates, *Bruno,* pp. 171–81, 197, 206, 211–15, 225, 241–9, 253, 403–14; Schmitt (1966), pp. 515–32; Walker, *Theology,* pp. 38–41, 51–8, 64–7; Vasoli, *Profezia*, pp. 231–62, 285–88, 315–49; idem (1988a), pp. 120–39; idem (1988b), pp. 154–63; Pantin (1988), pp. 167–83.

[64] Yates, *Bruno,* pp. 432–47; Purnell (1976), pp. 155–78; Grafton (1983), pp. 78–93; idem (1988), pp. 155–70.

[65] Scott I, p. 43; Grafton (1983), pp. 87–92; Walker, *Theology*, pp. 232–41, 258–63; McGuire and Rattansi (1966), pp. 108–9; Westfall, *Newton*, pp. 488–93, 510–12, 524–31.

[66] Mahé, *Hermès* II, pp. 9–11; for the period from Tiedemann through Festugière and after, several surveys of the literature are available; see: idem, pp. 12–33; Scott I, pp. 1–16, 43–8; Widengren (1967), pp. 29–57; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 34–54; Gonzalez Blanco (1984), pp. 2265–77. Grafton, *Forgers*, pp. 77–98, is an excellent analysis of Reitzenstein. For more specific references to the modern literature, see the bibliography and the notes to the text.

[67] Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 214.

[68] Zielinski (1905), p. 322.

[69] Bousset (1914), p. 100.

[70] See notes on *C.H.* 1.12, 15, 25; Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 65.

[71] Reitzenstein, *Studien*, p. 154.

[72] NF I, vii–X.

[73] Saffrey (1984), pp. xvii–xxxiv; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 29; cf. Fowden, *EH*, p. ??, ?. 5, citing Festugière, *ERGH*, p. 142.

[74] NF I, v; Festugière (1951b), p. 486.

[75] FR I, 85.

[76] FR I, 84.

[77] Festugière, *HMP*, p. 39.

[78] Festugière, HMP_y p. 38; FR I, 84; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 26–8; *C.H.* 1.31.

[79] FR II, 32, 46–7.

[80] Festugière, *HMP,* p. 30; cf. Scott in note 40, above.

[81] Mahé, *Hermès* II, 35–43.

[82] Fowden, *EH,* pp. 68–74.

[83] Fowden, *EH,* p. 213.

[84] Yates, *Bruno,* pp. 20–1.

[85] Westman (1977); Schmitt (1978); Vickers (1979); Copenhaver (1990); above, n. 65.

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I
⟨Discourse⟩ of Hermes Trismegistus: Poimandres

[1] Once, when thought came to me of the things that are and my thinking soared high and my bodily senses were restrained, like someone heavy with sleep from too much eating or toil of the body, an enormous being completely unbounded in size seemed to appear to me and call my name and say to me: "What do you want to hear and see; what do you want to learn and know from your understanding?"

[2] "Who are you?" I asked.

"I am Poimandres," he said, "mind of sovereignty; I know what you want, and I am with you everywhere."

[3] I said, "I wish to learn about the things that are, to understand their nature and to know god. How much I want to hear!" I said.

Then he said to me: "Keep in mind all that you wish to learn, and I will teach you."

[4] Saying this, he changed his appearance, and in an instant everything was immediately opened to me. I saw an endless vision in which everything became light – clear and joyful – and in seeing the vision I came to love it. After a little while, darkness arose separately and descended – fearful and gloomy – coiling sinuously so that it looked to me like a ⟨snake⟩. Then the darkness changed into something of a watery nature, indescribably agitated and smoking like a fire; it produced an unspeakable wailing roar. Then an inarticulate cry like the voice of fire came forth from it. [5] But from the light … a holy word mounted upon the ⟨watery⟩ nature, and untempered fire leapt up from the watery nature to the height above. The fire was nimble and piercing and active as well, and because the air was light it followed after spirit and rose up to the fire away from earth and water so that it seemed suspended from the fire. Earth and water stayed behind, mixed with one

another, so that ⟨earth⟩ could not be distinguished from water, but they were stirred to hear by the spiritual word that moved upon them.

[6] Poimandres said to me, "Have you understood what this vision means?"

"I shall come to know," said I.

"I am the light you saw, mind, your god," he said, "who existed before the watery nature that appeared out of darkness. The lightgiving word who comes from mind is the son of god."

"Go on," I said.

"This is what you must know: that in you which sees and hears is the word of the lord, but your mind is god the father; they are not divided from one another for their union is life."

"Thank you," I said.

"Understand the light, then, and recognize it." [7] After he said this, he looked me in the face for such a long time that I trembled at his appearance. But when he raised his head, I saw in my mind the light of powers beyond number and a boundless cosmos that had come to be. The fire, encompassed by great power and subdued, kept its place fixed. In the vision I had because of the discourse of Poimandres, these were my thoughts. [8] Since I was terrified, out of my wits, he spoke to me again. "In your mind you have seen the archetypal form, the preprinciple that exists before a beginning without end." This was what Poimandres said to me.

"The elements of nature – whence have they arisen?" I asked.

And he answered: "From the counsel of god which, having taken in the word and having seen the beautiful cosmos, imitated it, having become a cosmos through its own elements and its progeny of souls. [9] The mind who is god, being androgyne and existing as life and light, by speaking gave birth to a second mind, a craftsman, who, as god of fire and spirit, crafted seven governors; they encompass the sensible world in circles, and their government is called fate."

[10] "From the elements [ ] that weigh downwards, the word of god leapt straight up to the pure craftwork of nature and united with the craftsman-mind

(for the word was of the same substance). The weighty elements of nature were left behind, bereft of reason, so as to be mere matter. [11] The craftsman-mind, together with the word, encompassing the circles and whirling them about with a rush, turned his craftworks about, letting them turn from an endless beginning to a limitless end, for it starts where it stops. Revolving as mind wished them to, the circles brought forth from the weighty elements living things without reason (for they no longer kept the word with them); and the air brought forth winged things; the water things that swim. Earth and water had been separated from one another as mind wished, and ⟨earth⟩ brought forth from herself the living things that she held within, four-footed beasts ⟨and⟩ crawling things, wild animals and tame."

[12] "Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he had the father's image; and god, who was really in love with his own form, bestowed on him all his craftworks. [13] And after the man had observed what the craftsman had created with the father's help, he also wished to make some craftwork, and the father agreed to this. Entering the craftsman's sphere, where he was to have all authority, the man observed his brother's craftworks; the governors loved the man, and each gave a share of his own order. Learning well their essence and sharing in their nature, the man wished to break through the circumference of the circles to observe the rule of the one given power over the fire."

[14] "Having all authority over the cosmos of mortals and unreasoning animals, the man broke through the vault and stooped to look through the cosmic framework, thus displaying to lower nature the fair form of god. Nature smiled for love when she saw him whose fairness brings no surfeit ⟨and⟩ who holds in himself all the energy of the governors and the form of god, for in the water she saw the shape of the man's fairest form and upon the earth its shadow. When the man saw in the water the form like himself as it was in nature, he loved it and wished to inhabit it; wish and action came in the same moment, and he inhabited the unreasoning form. Nature took hold of her beloved, hugged him all about and embraced him, for they were lovers."

[15] "Because of this, unlike any other living thing on earth, mankind is twofold – in the body mortal but immortal in the essential man. Even though he is immortal and has authority over all things, mankind is affected by mortality because he is subject to fate; thus, although man is above the

cosmic framework, he became a slave within it. He is androgyne because he comes from an androgyne father, and he never sleeps because he comes from one who is sleepless. ⟨Yet love and sleep are his⟩ masters."

[16] And after this: "…, o my mind. I love the word also."

Poimandres said: "This is the mystery that has been kept hidden until this very day. When nature made love with the man, she bore a wonder most wondrous. In him he had the nature of the cosmic framework of the seven, who are made of fire and spirit, as I told you, and without delay nature at once gave birth to seven men, androgyne and exalted, whose natures were like those of the seven governors."

And after this: "O Poimandres, now I have come into a great longing, and I yearn to hear; so do not digress."

And Poimandres said, "Be silent; I have not yet unfolded to you the first discourse."

"As you see, I am silent," said I.

[17] "As I said, then, the birth of the seven was as follows. ⟨Earth⟩ was the female. Water did the fertilizing. Fire was the maturing force. Nature took spirit from the ether and brought forth bodies in the shape of the man. From life and light the man became soul and mind; from life came soul, from light came mind, and all things in the cosmos of the senses remained thus until a cycle ended ⟨and⟩ kinds of things began to be."

[18] "Hear the rest, the word you yearn to hear. When the cycle was completed, the bond among all things was sundered by the counsel of god. All living things, which had been androgyne, were sundered into two parts – humans along with them – and part of them became male, part likewise female. But god immediately spoke a holy speech: 'Increase in increasing and multiply in multitude, all you creatures and craftworks, and let him ⟨who⟩ is mindful recognize that he is immortal, that desire is the cause of death, and let him recognize all that exists.'"

[19] "After god said this, providence, through fate and through the cosmic framework, caused acts of intercourse and set in train acts of birth; and all things were multiplied according to kind. The one who recognized himself attained the chosen good, but the one who loved the body that came from the

error of desire goes on in darkness, errant, suffering sensibly the effects of death."

[20] "Those who lack knowledge, what great wrong have they done," I asked, "that they should be deprived of immortality?"

"You behave like a person who has not given thought to what he has heard. Did I not tell you to think?"

"I am thinking; I remember; and I am grateful as well."

"If you have understood, tell me: why do they deserve death who are in death?"

"Because what first gives rise to each person's body is the hateful darkness, from which comes the watery nature, from which the body was constituted in the sensible cosmos, from which death drinks."

[21] "Truly you have understood. But why is it that 'he who has understood himself advances toward god,' as god's discourse has it?"

"Because," I said, "the father of all things was constituted of light and life, and from him the man came to be."

"You say your speech well. Life and light are god and father, from whom the man came to be. So if you learn that you are from light and life and that you happen to come from them, you shall advance to life once again." This is what Poimandres said.

"But tell me again," I asked, "how shall I advance to life, O my mind? For god says, 'Let the person who is mindful recognize himself.' [22] All people have mind, do they not?"

"Hold your tongue, fellow. Enough talk. I myself, the mind, am present to the blessed and good and pure and merciful – to the reverent – and my presence becomes a help; they quickly recognize everything, and they propitiate the father lovingly and give thanks, praising and singing hymns affectionately and in the order appropriate to him. Before giving up the body to its proper death, they loathe the senses for they see their effects. Or rather I, the mind, will not permit the effects of the body to strike and work their results on them. As gatekeeper, I will refuse entry to the evil and shameful effects, cutting off the anxieties that come from them. [23] But from these I

remain distant – the thoughtless and evil and wicked and envious and greedy and violent and irreverent – giving way to the avenging demon who {wounds the evil person}, assailing him sensibly with the piercing fire and thus arming him the better for lawless deeds so that greater vengeance may befall him. Such a person does not cease longing after insatiable appetites, struggling in the darkness without satisfaction. {This} tortures him and makes the fire grow upon him all the more."

[24] "You have taught me all things well, o mind, just as I wanted. But tell me again ⟨about⟩ the way up; tell me how it happens."

To this Poimandres said: "First, in releasing the material body you give the body itself over to alteration, and the form that you used to have vanishes. To the demon you give over your temperament, now inactive. The body's senses rise up and flow back to their particular sources, becoming separate parts and mingling again with the energies. And feeling and longing go on toward irrational nature. [25] Thence the human being rushes up through the cosmic framework, at the first zone surrendering the energy of increase and decrease; at the second evil Machination, a device now inactive; at the third the illusion of longing, now inactive; at the fourth the ruler's arrogance, now freed of excess; at the fifth unholy presumption and daring recklessness; at the sixth the evil impulses that come from wealth, now inactive; and at the seventh zone the deceit that lies in ambush. [26] And then, stripped of the effects of the cosmic framework, the human enters the region of the ogdoad; he has his own proper power, and along with the blessed he hymns the father. Those present there rejoice together in his presence, and, having become like his companions, he also hears certain powers that exist beyond the ogdoadic region and hymn god with sweet voice. They rise up to the father in order and surrender themselves to the powers, and, having become powers, they enter into god. This is the final good for those who have received knowledge: to be made god. Why do you still delay? Having learned all this, should you not become guide to the worthy so that through you the human race might be saved by god?"

[27] As he was saying this to me, Poimandres joined with the powers. Then he sent me forth, empowered and instructed on the nature of the universe and on the supreme vision, after I had given thanks to the father of all and praised him. And I began proclaiming to mankind the beauty of reverence and knowledge: "People, earthborn men, you who have

surrendered yourselves to drunkenness and sleep and ignorance of god, make yourselves sober and end your drunken sickness, for you are bewitched in unreasoning sleep."

[28] When they heard, they gathered round with one accord. And I said, "Why have you surrendered yourselves to death, earthborn men, since you have the right to share in immortality? You who have journeyed with error, who have partnered with ignorance, think again: escape the shadowy light; leave corruption behind and take a share in immortality."

[29] Some of them, who had surrendered themselves to the way of death, resumed their mocking and withdrew, while those who desired to be taught cast themselves at my feet. Having made them rise, I became guide to my race, teaching them the words – how to be saved and in what manner – and I sowed the words of wisdom among them, and they were nourished from the ambrosial water. When evening came and the sun's light began to disappear entirely, I commanded them to give thanks to god, and when each completed the thanksgiving, he turned to his own bed.

[30] Within myself I recorded the kindness of Poimandres, and I was deeply happy because I was filled with what I wished, for the sleep of my body became sobriety of soul, the closing of my eyes became true vision, my silence became pregnant with good, and the birthing of the word became a progeny of goods. This happened to me because I was receptive of mind – of Poimandres, that is, the word of sovereignty. I have arrived, inspired with the divine breath of truth. Therefore, I give praise to god the father from my soul and with all my might:

[31] Holy is god, the father of all;
Holy is god, whose counsel is done by his own powers;
Holy is god, who wishes to be known and is known by his own people;
Holy are you, who by the word have constituted all things that are;
Holy are you, from whom all nature was born as image;
Holy are you, of whom nature has not made a like figure;
Holy are you, who are stronger than every power;
Holy are you, who surpass every excellence;
Holy are you, mightier than praises.

You whom we address in silence, the unspeakable, the unsayable, accept pure speech offerings from a heart and soul that reach up to you. [32] Grant my request not to fail in the knowledge that befits our essence; give me power; and with this gift I shall enlighten those who are in ignorance, brothers of my race, but your sons. Thus I believe and I bear witness; I advance to life and light. Blessed are you, father. He who is your man wishes to join you in the work of sanctification since you have provided him all authority.

II

[1] “Is it not true, Asclepius, that everything moved is moved in something and by something?”

“Certainly.”

“But isn’t it necessary for that in which something is moved to be larger than the moved?”

“It is necessary.”

“So then the mover is stronger than the moved?”

“Stronger indeed.”

“And that in which something is moved must necessarily have a nature contrary to that of the moved?”

“Yes, entirely so.”

[2] “This cosmos is large, then, and no body is larger?”

“Agreed.”

“And is it densely packed? For it has been filled with many other large bodies or, rather, with all the bodies that exist.”

“So it is.”

“But is the cosmos a body?”

“A body, yes.”

“And a moved body?”

[3] “Certainly.”

“The place in which it moves, then, how large must it be, and what is its nature? Is it not larger by far so as to sustain continuity of motion and not

hold back its movement lest the moved be crowded and confined?"

"It must be something truly enormous, Trismegistus."

[4] "What is its nature? It will be of a contrary nature, Asclepius, no? But the nature contrary to body is the incorporeal."

"Agreed."

"Place is incorporeal, then, but the incorporeal is either divine or else it is god. (By 'divine' I mean here the unbegotten, not the begotten.) [5] If it is divine, it is something essential; but if it is god, it comes to be even without essence. Otherwise, it is something intelligible, and this is why: for us, god is the foremost intelligible entity, but not so for god himself; what is intelligible falls within the awareness of one who thinks of it; thus, for himself god is not intelligible because he is not something distinct from the object of his thought, i.e., so as to be an object of thought for himself. [6] For us, however, he is something distinct; hence, he is an object of thought for us. But if place is intelligible, it is intelligible not as god but as place, and if it were intelligible as god, it would be regarded so not as place but as energy capable of containing. Yet everything moved is moved not in something moved but in something at rest. And the mover is also at rest, unable to be moved conjointly."

"How then, O Trismegistus, are the things of this world moved conjointly with their movers? You have said that the planetary spheres are moved by the spheres of the fixed."

"This motion, Asclepius, is not conjoint but opposed, for the spheres are not moved in the same way; they move contrary to one another, and the contrariety keeps the motion balanced through opposition. [7] Resistance is the stilling of motion. Since the planetary spheres are moved contrarily to the fixed {by a contrary encounter with them, they are moved because of their balance in relation to the contrariety itself}. It cannot be otherwise. For example: those bears that you see neither setting nor rising but turning about the same point, do you think they are moved or at rest?"

"They are moved, Trismegistus."

"What sort of motion, Asclepius?"

“Motion revolving about the same points.”

“Revolution is the same thing as motion about the same point that is held in place by immobility. Going around it prevents going beyond it, but when the going beyond is prevented, there is resistance to the going around, and thus the contrary motion remains constant, stabilized by the contrariety. [8] I will give you an example here on earth, one that your eyes can see: as they swim, observe mortal living things, those like a human, I mean; when the water rushes by, the resistance of feet and hands becomes an immobility so that the person is not swept downstream with the water.”

“A clear example, Trismegistus.”

“Thus, all motion is moved in immobility and by immobility. And it happens that the motion of the cosmos and of every living thing made of matter is produced not by things outside the body but by those within it acting upon the outside, by intelligible entities, either soul or spirit or something else incorporeal. For body does not move ensouled body, nor does it move any body at all, not even the soulless.”

[9] “How do you mean this, Trismegistus? Are they not bodies that move sticks and stones and all the other soulless things?”

“By no means, Asclepius. Not the body itself but what is within the body that moves the soulless thing is what moves them both, the body that bears as well as the body that is borne. Hence, the soulless will not move the soulless, and so you see how the soul is overloaded when it bears two bodies by itself. And so it is clear that things moved are moved in something and by something.”

[10] “Must things that are moved be moved in emptiness, Trismegistus?”

“Hold your tongue, Asclepius! Not one of the things that are is empty – by reason of their substantiality. For a being could not be a being if it were not full of substance. The subsistent can never become empty.”

“Are not some things empty, Trismegistus, such as a pail or a pot or a vat or other such things?”

“Ah, what a great mistake, Asclepius! Would you consider ‘empty’ the things that are entirely and completely full?”

[11] "What do you mean, Trismegistus?"

"Air is a body, no?"

"Yes, it is a body."

"But does not this body pervade everything that exists and fill them all by pervading them? And a body is a mixture constituted of the four elements, is it not? So all those things that you call 'empty' are full of air. But if they are full of air, they are also full of the four bodies, and so it turns out that a contrary account comes to light: that the things you call 'full' are all empty of air since they are crowded with these other bodies and have no place to take in the air. Therefore, the things you call 'empty' must be named 'hollow' rather than 'empty,' for in their substance they are full of air and spirit."

[12] "Your reasoning is irrefutable, Trismegistus. So what have we said of the place in which the universe is moved?"

"That it is incorporeal, Asclepius."

"What is the incorporeal, then?"

"Mind as a whole wholly enclosing itself, free of all body, unerring, unaffected, untouched, at rest in itself, capable of containing all things and preserving all that exists, and its rays (as it were) are the good, the truth, the archetype of spirit, the archetype of soul."

"What, then, is god?"

"God is what does not subsist as any of these since he is the cause of their being, for all of them and for each and every one of them that exists. [13] And he has left nothing else remaining that is not-being, for all things are those that come to be from things that are, not from those that are not. Things that are not do not have a nature that enables them to come to be; their nature is such that they cannot come to be anything. Things that are, on the other hand, do not have a nature that prevents them from ever existing." [14] {(What do you mean by what *never exists*?)}

"God is not mind, but he is the cause of mind's being; he is not spirit, but the cause of spirit's being; and he is not light, but the cause of light's being. Hence, one must show god reverence with those two names assigned to him alone and to no other. Except god alone, none of the other beings called gods

nor any human nor any demon can be good, in any degree. That good is he alone, and none other. All others are incapable of containing the nature of the good because they are body and soul and have no place that can contain the good. [15] For the magnitude of the good is as great as the substance of all beings, corporeal and incorporeal, sensible and intelligible. This is the good; this is god. You should not say that anything else is good or you will speak profanely, nor should you ever call god anything but 'the good' since this too would be profane. [16] All use the word 'good' in speaking, of course, but not all understand what it can mean. For this reason, god is not understood by all. In their ignorance, they apply the name 'good' to the gods and to certain humans even though these beings are never able to be good or to become so. The good is what is inalienable and inseparable from god, since it is god himself. All other immortal gods are given the name 'good' as an honor, but god is the good by nature, not because of honor. God has one nature – the good. In god and the good together there is but one kind, from which come all other kinds. The good is what gives everything and receives nothing; god gives everything and receives nothing; therefore, god is ⟨the⟩ good, and the good is god."

[17] "God's other name is 'father' because he is capable of making all things. Making is characteristic of a father. Prudent people therefore regard the making of children as a duty in life to be taken most seriously and greatly revered, and should any human being pass away childless, they see it as the worst misfortune and irreverence. After death such a person suffers retribution from demons. This is his punishment: the soul of the childless one is sentenced to a body that has neither a man's nature nor a woman's – a thing accursed under the sun. Most assuredly then, Asclepius, you should never congratulate a childless person. On the contrary, show pity for his calamity, knowing what punishment awaits him."

"This is the content and the extent of what should be told to you, Asclepius, by way of introduction to the nature of all things."

III
A sacred discourse of Hermes

[1] God is the glory of all things, as also are the divine and the divine nature. God, as well as mind and nature and matter, is the beginning of all things that are since he is wisdom meant to show them forth. The divine is also a beginning, and it is nature and energy and necessity and completion and renewal.

In the deep there was boundless darkness and water and fine intelligent spirit, all existing by divine power in chaos. Then a holy light was sent forth, and elements solidified [ ] out of liquid essence. And all the gods {divide the parts} of germinal nature. [2] While all was unlimited and unformed, light elements were set apart to the heights and the heavy were grounded in the moist sand, the whole of them delimited by fire and raised aloft, to be carried by spirit. The heavens appeared in seven circles, the gods became visible in the shapes of the stars and all their constellations, and the arrangement of ⟨this lighter substance⟩ corresponded to the gods contained in it. The periphery rotated ⟨in⟩ the air, carried in a circular course by divine spirit.

[3] Through his own power, each god sent forth what was assigned to him. And the beasts came to be – four-footed, crawling, water-dwelling, winged – and every germinating seed and grass and every flowering plant; {within them they had the seed of rebirth. The gods sowed} the generations of humans to know the works of god; to be a working witness to nature; to increase the number of mankind; to master all things under heaven; to discern the things that are good; to increase by increasing and multiply by multiplying. And through the wonder-working course of the cycling gods they created every soul incarnate to contemplate heaven, the course of the heavenly gods, the works of god and the working of nature; to examine things that are good; to know divine power; to know the whirling changes of fair and foul; and to discover every means of working skillfully with things that are good.

[4] For them this is the beginning of the virtuous life and of wise thinking as far as the course of the cycling gods destines it, and it is also the beginning of their release to what will remain of them after they have left great monuments on earth in works of industry. {In the fame of seasons they will become dim, and, from every birth of ensouled flesh, from the sowing of crops and from every work of industry,} what is diminished will be renewed by necessity and by the renewal that comes from the gods and by the course of nature's measured cycle.

For the divine is the entire combination of cosmic influence renewed by nature, and nature has been established in the divine.

IV
A discourse of Hermes to Tat: The mixing bowl or the monad

[1] "Since the craftsman made the whole cosmos by reasoned speech, not by hand, you should conceive of him as present, as always existing, as having made all things, as the one and only and as having crafted by his own will the things that are. For this is his body, neither tangible nor visible nor measurable nor dimensional nor like any other body; it is not fire nor water nor air nor spirit, yet all things come from it. Because he is good, it was ⟨not⟩ for himself alone that he wished to make this offering and to adorn the earth; [2] so he sent the man below, an adornment of the divine body, mortal life from life immortal. And if the cosmos prevailed over living things as something ever-living, ⟨the man⟩ prevailed even over the cosmos through reason and mind. The man became a spectator of god's work. He looked at it in astonishment and recognized its maker. [3] God shared reason among all people, O Tat, but not mind, though he begrudged it to none. Grudging envy comes not from on high; it forms below in the souls of people who do not possess mind."

"For what reason, then, did god not share mind with all of them, my father?"

"He wanted it put between souls, my child, as a prize for them to contest."

[4] "And where did he put it?"

"He filled a great mixing bowl with it and sent it below, appointing a herald whom he commanded to make the following proclamation to human hearts: 'Immerse yourself in the mixing bowl if your heart has the strength, if it believes you will rise up again to the one who sent the mixing bowl below, if it recognizes the purpose of your coming to be.'"

"All those who heeded the proclamation and immersed themselves in mind participated in knowledge and became perfect people because they received mind. But those who missed the point of the proclamation are people of reason because they did not receive ⟨the gift of⟩ mind as well and do not know the purpose or the agents of their coming to be. [5] These people have sensations much like those of unreasoning animals, and, since their temperament is willful and angry, they feel no awe of things that deserve to be admired; they divert their attention to the pleasures and appetites of their bodies; and they believe that mankind came to be for such purposes. But those who participate in the gift that comes from god, O Tat, are immortal rather than mortal if one compares their deeds, for in a mind of their own they have comprehended all – things on earth, things in heaven and even what lies beyond heaven. Having raised themselves so far, they have seen the good and, having seen it, they have come to regard the wasting of time here below as a calamity. They have scorned every corporeal and incorporeal thing, and they hasten toward the one and only. [6] This, Tat, is the way to learn about mind, to {resolve perplexities} in divinity and to understand god. For the mixing bowl is divine."

"I too wish to be immersed, my father."

"Unless you first hate your body, my child, you cannot love yourself, but when you have loved yourself, you will possess mind, and if you have mind, you will also have a share in the way to learn."

"What do you mean by this, father?"

"My child, it is impossible to be engaged in both realms, the mortal and the divine. Since there are two kinds of entities, corporeal and incorporeal, corresponding to mortal and divine, one is left to choose one or the other, if choice is desired. One cannot {have both together when one is left to choose}, but lessening the one reveals the activity of the other."

[7] "Choosing the stronger, then [ ], not only has splendid consequences for the one who chooses – in that it makes the human into a god – but it also shows reverence toward god. On the other hand, choosing the lesser has been mankind's destruction, though it was no offence to god, with this single reservation: just as processions passing by in public cannot achieve anything of themselves, though they can be a hindrance to others, in the same way

these people are only parading through the cosmos, led astray by pleasures of the body."

[8] "Since this is so, Tat, what proceeds from god has been and will be available to us. May what comes from us be suited to it and not deficient. And the evils for which we are responsible, who choose them instead of good things, are no responsibility of god's. Do you see how many bodies we must pass through, my child, how many troops of demons, ⟨cosmic⟩ connections and stellar circuits in order to hasten toward the one and only? For the good is untraversable, infinite and unending; it is also without beginning, but to us it seems to have a beginning – our knowledge of it. [9] Thus, knowledge is not a beginning of the good, but it furnishes us the beginning of the good that will be known. So let us seize this beginning and travel with all speed, for the path is very crooked that leaves familiar things of the present to return to primordial things of old. Visible things delight us, but the invisible cause mistrust. Bad things are the more open to sight, but the good is invisible to what can be seen. For the good has neither shape nor outline. This is why it is like itself but unlike all others, for the bodiless cannot be visible to body. [10] This is the difference between like and unlike and the deficiency in the unlike with respect to the like."

"The monad, because it is the beginning and root of all things, is in them all as root and beginning. Without a beginning there is nothing, and a beginning comes from nothing except itself if it is the beginning of other things. Because it is a beginning, then, the monad contains every number, is contained by none, and generates every number without being generated by any other number. [11] But everything generated is imperfect and divisible, subject to increase and decrease. None of this happens to what is perfect. And what can be increased takes its increase from the monad, but it is defeated by its own weakness, no longer able to make room for the monad."

"Such then, Tat, is god's image, as best I have been able to sketch it for you. If your vision of it is sharp and you understand it with the eyes of your heart, believe me, child, you shall discover the road that leads above or, rather, the image itself will show you the way. For the vision of it has a special property. It takes hold of those who have had the vision and draws them up, just as the magnet stone draws iron, so they say."

V
A discourse of Hermes to Tat, his son: That god is invisible and entirely visible

[1] This discourse I shall also deliver to you in full, O Tat, lest you go uninitiated in the mysteries of the god who is greater than any name. You must understand how something that seems invisible to the multitude will become entirely visible to you. Actually, if it were ⟨not⟩ invisible, it would not ⟨always⟩ be. Everything seen has been begotten because at some point it came to be seen. But the invisible always is, and, because it always is, it does not need to come to be seen. Also, while remaining invisible because it always is, it makes all other things visible. The very entity that makes visibility does not make itself visible; what ⟨begets⟩ is not itself begotten; what presents images of everything ⟨is not⟩ present to the imagination. For there is imagination only of things begotten. Coming to be is nothing but imagination. [2] Clearly, the one who alone is unbegotten is also unimagined and invisible, but in presenting images of all things he is seen through all of them and in all of them; he is seen especially by those whom he wished to see him.

You then, Tat, my child, pray first to the lord, the father, the only, who is not one but from whom the one comes; ask him the grace to enable you to understand so great a god, to permit even one ray of his to illuminate your thinking. Only understanding, because it, too, is invisible, sees the invisible, and if you have the strength, Tat, your mind's eye will see it. For the lord, who is ungrudging, is seen through the entire cosmos. Can you see understanding and hold it in your hands? Can you have a vision of the image of god? If what is in you is also invisible to you, how will god reveal his inner self to you through the eyes?

[3] If you want to see god, consider the sun, consider the circuit of the moon, consider the order of the stars. Who keeps this order? (For every

order is bounded in number and in place.) The sun, the greatest god of those in heaven, to whom all heavenly gods submit as to a king and ruler, this sun so very great, larger than earth and sea, allows stars smaller than him to circle above him. To whom does he defer, my child? Whom does he fear? Does not each of these stars in heaven make the same circuit or a similar one? Who determined the direction and the size of the circuit for each of them?

[4] Who owns this instrument, this bear, the one that turns around itself and carries the whole cosmos with it? Who set limits to the sea? Who settled the earth in place? There is someone, Tat, who is maker and master of all this. Without someone to make them, neither place nor number nor measure could have been maintained. Everything that is an order ⟨has been made; only⟩ something placeless and measureless can be not made. But even this does not lack a master, my child. Even if the unordered is deficient {– deficient, that is, in that it does not retain the character of order –} it is still subject to a master who has not yet imposed order on it.

[5] Would that you could grow wings and fly up into the air, lifted between earth and heaven to see the solid earth, the fluid sea, the streaming rivers, the pliant air, the piercing fire, the coursing stars, and heaven speeding on its axis about the same points. Oh, this is a most happy sight to see, my child, to have a vision of all these in a single instant, to see the motionless set in motion and the invisible made visible through the things that it makes! This is the order of the cosmos, and this is the cosmos of order.

[6] If you wish also to see the vision through mortal things on earth and in the deep, my child, consider how the human being is crafted in the womb, examine the skill of the craftwork carefully, and learn who it is that crafts this beautiful, godlike image of mankind. Who traced the line round the eyes? Who pierced the holes for nostrils and ears? Who opened up the mouth? Who stretched out the sinews and tied them down? Who made channels for the veins? Who hardened the bones? Who drew skin over the flesh? Who parted the fingers? Who flattened the bottoms of the feet? Who cut passages for the pores? Who stretched out the spleen? Who made the heart in the form of a pyramid? Who joined the {ribs} together? Who flattened the liver? Who hollowed out the lungs? Who made the belly spacious? Who set the most honored parts in relief to make them visible but hid the shameful parts away?

[7] See how many skills have been applied to the same, single material, how many labors within the compass of a single work, all of them exquisite things, all finely measured, yet all different. Who made them all? What sort of mother or what sort of father if not the invisible god, who crafted them all by his own will? [8] No one claims that a statue or a picture has been produced unless there is a sculptor or a painter. Has this craftwork been produced without a craftsman, then? Oh, how full of blindness, how full of irreverence, how full of ignorance! Tat, my child, never deprive the craftworks of their craftsman.… Or rather, he is stronger even {than a name used of god,} so great is the father of all. Surely it is he alone whose work it is to be a father.

[9] If you force me to say something still more daring, it is his essence to be pregnant with all things and to make them. As it is impossible for anything to be produced without a maker, so also is it impossible for this maker [not] to exist always unless he is always making everything in heaven, in the air, on earth, in the deep, in every part of the cosmos, in every part of the universe, in what is and in what is not. For there is nothing in all the cosmos that he is not. He is himself the things that are and those that are not. Those that are he has made visible; those that are not he holds within him. [10] This is the god who is greater than any name; this is the god invisible and entirely visible. This god who is evident to the eyes may be seen in the mind. He is bodiless and many-bodied; or, rather, he is all-bodied. There is nothing that he is not, for he also is all that is, and this is why he has all names, because they are of one father, and this is why he has no name, because he is father of them all.

Who may praise you, then, acting on your behalf or according to your purpose? And where shall I look to praise you – above, below, within, without? For there is no direction about you nor place nor any other being. All is within you; all comes from-you. You give everything and take nothing. For you have it all, and there is nothing that you do not have.

[11] When shall I sing a hymn to you? One cannot detect in you time or season. For what shall I sing the hymn – for what you have made or what you have not made, for what you have made visible or what you have kept hidden? And wherefore shall I sing the hymn to you – for being something that is part of me, or has a special property, or is something apart? For you are whatever I am; you are whatever I make; you are whatever I say. You are

everything, and there is nothing else; what is not, you are as well. You are all that has come to be; you are what has not come to be; you are the mind who understands, the father who makes his craftwork, the god who acts, and the good who makes all things.

[The matter composed of the finest particles is air, but air is soul, soul is mind, and mind is god.]

VI
That the good is in god alone and nowhere else

[1] The good, Asclepius, is in nothing except in god alone, or rather god himself is always the good. If this is so, the good must be the substance of all motion and generation (for nothing is abandoned by it), but this substance has an energy about it that stays at rest, that has no lack and no excess, that is perfectly complete, a source of supply, present in the beginning of all things. When I say that what supplies everything is good, I also mean that it is wholly and always good.

Yet this good belongs [ ] to nothing else except to god alone. God lacks for nothing, to become evil in longing to possess it. Nothing that exists can be lost to him, to cause him grief in losing it (for grief is a part of vice). Nothing is stronger than god, to make an adversary of him (nor does he have a companion to give him injury); ⟨nothing is more beautiful,⟩ to cause desire in him; nothing is unheeding of him, to make him angry; and nothing is wiser, to make him jealous.

[2] Since none of these qualities belongs to the substance, what remains but the good alone? Just as none of these other qualities exists in such a substance, by the same token the good will be found in none of the other substances. All the other qualities exist in all things, in the small, in the large, in things taken one by one and in the living thing itself that is larger than all of them and the most powerful. Since generation itself is subject to passion, things begotten are full of passions, but where there is passion, there is no good to be found, and, where the good is, there is not a single passion – there is no night where it is day and no day where it is night. Hence, the good cannot exist in generation; it exists only in the unbegotten. Participation in all things has been given in matter; so also has participation in the good been given. This is how the cosmos is good, in that it also makes all things; ⟨thus,⟩ it is good with respect to the making that it does. In all other respects,

however, it is not good; it is subject to passion and subject to motion and a maker of things subject to passion.

[3] With reference to humanity, one uses the term "good" in comparison to "evil." Here below, the evil that is not excessive is the good, and the good is the least amount of evil here below. The good cannot be cleansed of vice here below, for the good is spoiled by evil here below and, once spoiled, it no longer remains good. Since it does not remain so, it becomes evil. The good is in god alone, then, or god himself is the good. Therefore, Asclepius, only the name of the good exists among mankind – never the fact. It cannot exist here. Material body, squeezed on all sides by vice, sufferings, pains, longings, angry feelings, delusions and mindless opinions, has no room for the good. And this is the worst of all, Asclepius: here below, they believe in each of the things I have just mentioned as the greatest good when actually it is insuperable evil. Gluttony ⟨is the⟩ supplier of all evils…. Error is the absence of the good here below.

[4] As for me, I give thanks to god for what he has put in my mind, even to know of the good that it is impossible for it to exist in the cosmos. For the cosmos is a plenitude of vice, as god is a plenitude of the good, or the good of god.… If indeed there are things preeminently beautiful near to god's essence, those seem perhaps even cleaner and purer in some degree which are part of him. One dares to say, Asclepius, that god's essence (if, in fact, he has an essence) is the beautiful but that the beautiful and the good are not to be detected in any of the things in the cosmos. All the things that are subject to the sight of the eyes are as phantoms and shadowy illusions, but those not subject to it, especially the ⟨essence⟩ of the beautiful and the good.… As the eye cannot see god, neither can it see the beautiful and the good, for they are integral parts of god alone, properties of god, peculiar to him, inseparable, most beloved; either god loves them or they love god.

[5] If you can understand god, you will understand the beautiful and good, the exceedingly bright whose brightness god surpasses. For this is incomparable beauty and inimitable good, as is god himself. As you understand god, then, also understand the beautiful and the good. Because they are not separated from god, these have nothing in common with other [ ] living things. If you ask about god, you ask also about the beautiful. Only one road travels from here to the beautiful – reverence combined with knowledge. [6] Hence, those who remain in ignorance and do not travel the

road of reverence dare to say that mankind is beautiful and good, but a human cannot see nor even dream of what the good might be. Mankind has been overrun by every evil, and he believes that evil is good; therefore, he uses evil the more insatiably and fears being deprived of it, striving with all his might not only to possess it but even to increase it. Such, Asclepius, are the good and the beautiful for humans, things we can neither shun nor hate. Hardest of all to bear is that we have need of them and cannot live without them.

VII
That the greatest evil in mankind is ignorance concerning god

[1] Where are you heading in your drunkenness, you people? Have you swallowed the doctrine of ignorance undiluted, vomiting it up already because you cannot hold it? Stop and sober yourselves up! Look up with the eyes of the heart – if not all of you, at least those of you who have the power. The vice of ignorance floods the whole earth and utterly destroys the soul shut up in the body, preventing it from anchoring in the havens of deliverance. [2] Surely you will not sink in this great flood? Those of you who can will take the ebb and gain the haven of deliverance and anchor there. Then, seek a guide to take you by the hand and lead you to the portals of knowledge. There shines the light cleansed of darkness. There no one is drunk. All are sober and gaze with the heart toward one who wishes to be seen, who is neither heard nor spoken of, who is seen not with the eyes but with mind and heart. But first you must rip off the tunic that you wear, the garment of ignorance, the foundation of vice, the bonds of corruption, the dark cage, the living death, the sentient corpse, the portable tomb, the resident thief, the one who hates through what he loves and envies through what he hates.

[3] Such is the odious tunic you have put on. It strangles you and drags you down with it so that you will not hate its viciousness, not look up and see the fair vision of truth and the good that lies within, not understand the plot that it has plotted against you when it made insensible the organs of sense, made them inapparent and unrecognized for what they are, blocked up with a great load of matter and jammed full of loathsome pleasure, so that you do not hear what you must hear nor observe what you must observe.

VIII
That none of the things that are is destroyed, and they are mistaken who say that changes are deaths and destructions

[1] "Now, my son, we must speak about soul and body and say in what way the soul is immortal and whence comes the energy that composes and dissolves the body. Death actually has nothing to do with this. Death is a notion that arises from the term 'immortal': either it is an empty usage, or, through the loss of the first syllable, 'immortal' is taken to mean 'mortal.' Death has to do with destruction, yet none of the things in the cosmos is destroyed. If the cosmos is a second god and an immortal living thing, it is impossible for any part of this immortal living thing to die. All things in the cosmos are parts of the cosmos, but especially mankind, the living thing that reasons."

[2] "God is in reality the first of all entities, eternal, unbegotten, craftsman of the whole of existence. But by his agency a second god came to be in his image, and by him this second god is sustained, nurtured and immortalized, as from an eternal father, everliving because he is immortal. In fact, the everliving differs from the eternal. God did not come to be by another's agency, and, if he came to be, it was by his own agency. He never came to be, ⟨however⟩; he comes to be always. {This is the eternal being through whom the universe is eternal,} the father who is eternal because he exists through himself. But the cosmos became {everliving} and immortal from an {eternal} father. [3] And the father {took the matter that he desired} to set aside and made it all into a spherical form with body and bulk. The matter that he invested with this spherical quality is immortal, and its materiality is eternal. Further, the father implanted in the sphere the qualities of forms, shutting them up as in a cave. He wanted to adorn what comes after him with every quality, to surround the whole body with immortality so that

even matter, tending to separate from the composition of this body, would not dissolve into its typical disorder. When matter was without body, my child, it was without order. Especially here below, matter has {the disorder confined to the other lesser things that have qualities,} the property of increase and decrease that humans call death. [4] But this disorder arises among things that live on earth; the bodies of heavenly beings have a single order that they got from the father in the beginning. And this order is kept undissolved by the recurrence of each of them. The recurrence of earthly bodies, by contrast, is {the dissolution} of their composition, and this dissolution causes them to recur as undissolved bodies – immortal, in other words. Thus arises a loss of awareness but not a destruction of bodies."

[5] "According to the father's will, and unlike other living things on earth, mankind, the third living thing, came to be in the image of the cosmos, possessing mind as well as a relation not only of sympathy with the second god but also of thought with the first god. For they have perception of the former god as of a body, but they take thought of the latter as of a mind without body, as of the good."

"Does this living thing not perish, then?"

"Hold your tongue, my child, and understand what god is, what the cosmos is, what an immortal living thing is, what a dissoluble living thing is, and understand that the cosmos was made by god and is in god but that mankind was made by the cosmos and is in the cosmos; understand that god begins, contains, and composes all things."

IX
On understanding and sensation: [That the beautiful and good are in god alone and nowhere else]

[1] "Yesterday, Asclepius, I delivered the perfect discourse, and now I think that it needs a sequel, an exposition of the discourse on sensation. Apparently, there is a difference between sensation and understanding, the former being material and the latter essential. To me, however, the two appear to be combined, not separate – in humans, I mean, for in other living things sensation is combined with the natural character, but in humans understanding is combined with it ⟨as well⟩." (Mind differs from understanding as much as god differs from divinity. Divinity comes to be by god's agency, understanding by the agency of mind. Understanding is the sister of reasoned speech, or each is the other's instrument. There is no utterance of reasoned speech without understanding, nor is there evidence of understanding without reasoned speech.)

[2] "Both sensation and understanding flow together into humans, intertwined with one another, as it were. For without sensation it is impossible to understand, and without understanding it is impossible {to have sensation.}"

"Can understanding be understood without sensation, however, in the way that one pictures images when dreaming?"

"{It seems to me that in dream-vision both these faculties have been eliminated, although, when sleepers wake, ⟨understanding⟩ and sensation ⟨are always combined.⟩} At any rate, ⟨sensation⟩ is distributed to body and to soul, and, when both these parts of sensation are in harmony with one another, then there is an utterance of understanding, engendered by mind."

[3] “Mind conceives every mental product: both the good, when mind receives seeds from god, as well as the contrary kind, when the seeds come from some demonic being. {Unless it is illuminated by god,} no part of the cosmos is without a demon that steals into the mind to sow the seed of its own energy, and what has been sown the mind conceives – adulteries, murders, assaults on one’s father, acts of sacrilege and irreverence, suicides by hanging or falling from a cliff, and all other such works of demons.”

[4] “Few seeds come from god, but they are potent and beautiful and good – virtue, moderation and reverence. Reverence is knowledge of god, and one who has come to know god, filled with all good things, has thoughts that are divine and not like those of the multitude. This is why those who are in knowledge do not please the multitude, nor does the multitude please them. They appear to be mad, and they bring ridicule on themselves. They are hated and scorned, and perhaps they may even be murdered. As I have said, vice must dwell here below since this is its native land. The earth is its native land, not the cosmos, as some will blasphemously claim. The godfearing person, at least, will withstand all this because he is aware of knowledge, for all things are good to such a person, even things that others find evil. If they lay plots against him, he refers it all to knowledge, and he alone makes evil into good.”

[5] “I return again to the discourse on sensation. For sensation to have a share in understanding is human, but, as I said before, not every person enjoys understanding. One will be a material, another an essential person. As I mentioned, material people surrounded by vice get the seed of their understanding from the demons, but god saves those who in their essence are surrounded by good. God, craftsman of all things, makes all things like himself in crafting them, but these things that begin as good come to differ in their use of energy. The motion of the cosmos, as it grinds away, produces generations of different kinds: some it soils with vice; others it cleanses with the good. For the cosmos has its own sensation and understanding, Asclepius, not like the human, not diverse, but far stronger and simpler.”

[6] “The sole sensation and understanding in the cosmos is to make all things and unmake them into itself again, an instrument of god’s will. In reality, god made the instrument to make all things actively in itself, taking under its protection the seeds it has received from god. In dissolving all things, the cosmos renews them, and when things have been dissolved in this

way, the cosmos (like life's good farmer) offers them renewal through the same process of change that moves the cosmos. There is ⟨nothing⟩ that is not a product of the cosmic fecundity. In moving, it makes all things live, and it is at once the location and the craftsman of life. [7] All bodies come from matter but in different ways: some come from earth, some from water, some from air and some from fire. All are composite bodies, some of them more strongly so, and some are simpler. The more strongly composite are the heavier bodies; those less so are the lighter. The rapid motion of the cosmos produces diversity in causing generations of different kinds. When the cosmos breathes most frequently, it offers qualities to bodies, and their plenitude is one thing only – life. [8] Thus, god is father of the cosmos, but the cosmos is father of the things in the cosmos; the cosmos is the son of god, and the things in the cosmos are made by the cosmos. It is rightly called 'cosmos' or 'arrangement,' for it arranges all things in the diversity of generation, in the ceaselessness of life, in the tirelessness of activity, in the rapidity of necessity, in the associability of the elements, and in the order of things that come to be. That it should be called an 'arrangement,' then, is necessary and fitting."

"Therefore, in all living things sensation and understanding enter from outside, breathed into things by the atmosphere, but the cosmos got them once and for all when it came to be, and, having got them, it keeps them by god's agency. [9] God is not without sensation and understanding, though some would have it so, committing blasphemy in an excess of piety. For all things that exist are in god, Asclepius. They have come to be by god's agency, and they depend from on high, some of them acting through bodies, others moving through psychic substance, or making life through spirit, or taking in the spent remains, which is as it should be. Or rather, to let the truth be shown, I should say that god does not contain these things. He is all of them, so he does not acquire them as something added from outside but gives them freely to the outside, and this is god's sensation and understanding, always moving everything. The time will never come when any of the things that are will be abandoned. When I speak of the things that are, I speak of god. For god holds within him the things that are; none are outside of him; and he is outside of none."

[10] "If you are mindful, Asclepius, these things should seem true to you, but they will be beyond belief if you have no knowledge. To understand is to

believe, and not to believe is not to understand. Reasoned discourse does ⟨not⟩ get to the truth, but mind is powerful, and, when it has been guided by reason up to a point, it has the means to get ⟨as far as⟩ the truth. After mind had considered all this carefully and had discovered that all of it is in harmony with the discoveries of reason, it came to believe, and in this beautiful belief it found rest. By an act of god, then, those who have understood find what I have been saying believable, but those who have not understood do not find it believable. Let this much be told about understanding and sensation."

X
[Discourse] of Hermes Trismegistus: The key

[1] "Yesterday's discourse, Asclepius, I entrusted to you. It is right that I entrust today's to Tat since it is a summary of the *General Discourses* delivered to him."

" Therefore, O Tat, god the father and the good have the same nature – or rather activity; 'nature' is the term for {growth} and increase, which apply to things that change and move … while 'activity' ⟨applies⟩ also ⟨to the⟩ unmoved, to the divine, that is, {in which he himself wishes to include the human. Elsewhere} we have taught about divine as well as human activities, which one must now understand in the same sense as on those other occasions."

[2] "God's activity is will, and his essence is to will all things to be. For what are god the father and the good but the being of all things and, of things that are no longer, at least the very substance of their existence. This is god, this is the father, this is the good, to whom nothing else belongs. For the cosmos, ⟨as⟩ also the sun, is itself the father of things that exist by participation, but for living things it is not also – equally with god – the cause of the good nor of life. But if it is the cause, it is in any event entirely constrained by the good will, without which nothing can be or come to be. [3] The father, receiving the appetite for the good, by way of the sun, causes the begetting and rearing of his children, for the good is the principle of making. But the good can come to be in none other than him alone who receives nothing but wills all things to be. I will not say 'who makes,' Tat, for much of the time one who makes is wanting both in quality and quantity in that sometimes he makes and sometimes not; now he makes this kind and this many, now the opposite. But god the father is the good in that he ⟨wills⟩ all things to be. [4] So it is, then, for one who can see. For god also wishes this seeing to happen, {and it happens for him too and chiefly,} and all else

happens because of it… . For being recognized is characteristic of the good. ⟨This⟩ is the good, Tat."

"You have filled us with a vision, father, which is good and very beautiful, and my mind's eye is almost {blinded} in such a vision."

"Yes, but the vision of the good is not like the ray of the sun which, because it is fiery, dazzles the eyes with light and makes them shut. On the contrary, it illuminates to the extent that one capable of receiving the influence of intellectual splçndor can receive it. It probes more sharply, but it does no harm, and it is full of all immortality. [5] Those able to drink somewhat more deeply of the vision often fall asleep, moving out of the body toward a sight most fair, just as it happened to Ouranos and Kronos, our ancestors."

"Would that we, too, could see it, father."

"Indeed, my child, would that we could. But we are still too weak now for this sight; we are not yet strong enough to open our mind's eyes and look on the incorruptible, incomprehensible beauty of that good. In the moment when you have nothing to say about it, you will see it, for the knowledge of it is divine silence and suppression of all the senses. [6] One who has understood it can understand nothing else, nor can one w[7]ho has looked on it look on anything else or hear of anything else, nor can he move his body in any way. He stays still, all bodily senses and motions forgotten. Having illuminated all his mind, this beauty kindles his whole soul and by means of body draws it upward, and beauty changes his whole person into essence. For when soul has looked on ⟨the⟩ beauty of the good, my child, it cannot be deified while in a human body."

[7] "Deification, father – what do you mean?"

"The changes that belong to any separated soul, my son."

"What do you mean by 'separated'?"

"In the *General Discourses* did you not hear that all the souls whirled about in all the cosmos – portioned out, as it were – come from the one soul of the all? Many are the changes of these souls, then, some toward a happier lot, others the opposite. The snake-like change into water creatures; the watery change into things of dry land; the dry-land souls change into winged

things; the aerial into humans; and human beings, changing into demons, possess the beginning of immortality, and so then they enter the troop of gods, which is really two troops, one wandering, the other fixed. [8] And this is soul's most perfect glory. But if a soul that has entered into humans remains vicious, it neither tastes immortality nor shares in the good but turns back and rushes down the road toward the snakes, and this is the sentence pronounced against a vicious soul."

"The vice of soul is ignorance. For the soul, when it is blind and discerns none of the things that are nor their nature nor the good, is shaken by the bodily passions, and the′ wretched thing becomes – in ignorance of itself – a slave to vile and monstrous bodies, bearing the body like a burden, not ruling but being ruled. This is the vice of soul. [9] The virtue of soul, by contrast, is knowledge; for one who knows is good and reverent and already divine."

"Who is this person, father?"

"One who says little and hears little. He fights with shadows, my son, who wastes time on talking and listening to talk. One neither speaks nor hears of god the father and the good. This being so – that there are senses in all things that are because they cannot exist without them – yet knowledge differs greatly from sensation; for sensation comes when the object prevails, while knowledge is the goal of learning, and learning is a gift from god. [10] For all learning is incorporeal, using as instrument the mind itself, as mind uses body. Both enter into body, then, the mental and the material. For everything must be the product of opposition and contrariety, and it cannot be otherwise."

"Who is this material god, then?"

"The cosmos, which is beautiful but not good. For it is material and easily affected, and of all those things that feel affect it is foremost, but among the things that are it is secondary and incomplete in itself; once it has come to be, it exists forever, but it exists in becoming and comes to be forever as the becoming of qualities and quantities; for it is subject to movement, and every motion of matter is becoming."

[11] "The immobility of mind initiates the motion of matter in this way: Since the cosmos is a sphere – a head, that is – and since there is nothing material above the head (just as there is nothing of mind below the feet,

where all is matter), and since mind is a head which is moved spherically – in the manner of a head, that is – things joined to the membrane of this head (⟨in which⟩ is the soul) are by nature immortal, as if they have more soul than body because body has been made in soul; things far away from the membrane, however, are mortal, because they have more body than soul; thus, every living being, and likewise the universe, has been constituted of the material and the mental."

[12] "And the cosmos is first, but after the cosmos the second living thing is the human, who is first of mortal beings and like other living things has ensoulment. Moreover, the human is not only not good, but because he is mortal he is evil as well. For the cosmos is not good because it moves, yet because it is immortal it is not evil. But the human, because he moves and is mortal, is evil. [13] A human soul is carried in this way: the mind is in the reason; the reason is in the soul; the soul is in the spirit; the spirit, passing through veins and arteries and blood, moves the living thing and, in a manner of speaking, bears it up."

"Some hold, therefore, that the soul is blood, mistaking its nature and not seeing that the spirit must first be withdrawn into the soul and then, when the blood thickens and the veins and arteries are emptied, this destroys the living thing; and this is the death of the body."

[14] "All things depend from one beginning, but the beginning depends from the one and only, and the beginning moves so that it can again become a beginning; only the one, however, stands still and does not move. There are these three, then: god the father and the good; the cosmos; and the human. And god holds the cosmos, but the cosmos holds the human. And the cosmos becomes the son of god, but the human becomes the son of the cosmos, a grandson, as it were."

[15] "For god does not ignore mankind; on the contrary, he recognizes him fully and wishes to be recognized. For mankind this is the only deliverance, the knowledge of god. It is ascent to Olympus. A soul becomes good only in this way, though it is not good ⟨forever⟩ but becomes evil. By necessity it becomes so."

"What do you mean, O Trismegistus?"

“Envision the soul of a child, my son, which has not yet accepted its separation from itself; its body has not yet attained its full bulk, {of which it has only a little as yet}. How beautiful it is to look at, from every point of view, not yet sullied by the passions of the body, still depending closely from the soul of the cosmos. But when the body gets its bulk and drags the soul down to the body’s grossness, the soul, having separated from itself, gives birth to forgetting, and it no longer shares in the beautiful and the good. The forgetting becomes vice.”

[16] “The same thing also happens to those who leave the body. When the soul rises up to itself, the spirit is drawn into the blood, the soul into the spirit, but the mind, since it is divine by nature, becomes purified of its garments and takes on a fiery body, ranging about everywhere, leaving the soul to judgment and the justice it deserves.”

“What do you mean, father? How is mind parted from soul and soul from spirit when you say that soul is the garment of the mind and spirit the garment of the soul?”

[17] “The hearer must be of one mind with the speaker, my son, and of one spirit as well; he must have hearing quicker than the speech of the speaker. In an earthy body occurs the combining of these garments, my son, for the mind cannot seat itself alone and naked in an earthy body. The earthy body cannot support so great an immortality, nor can so great a dignity endure defiling contact with a body subject to passion. Mind, therefore, has taken the soul as a shroud, and the soul, which is itself something divine, uses the spirit as a sort of armoring-servant. The spirit governs the living being.”

[18] “Then, when the mind has got free of the earthy body, it immediately puts on its own tunic, a tunic of fire, in which it could not stay when in the earthy body. (For earth cannot bear fire; the whole thing burns even from a little spark; this is why water has spread all around the earth guarding like a fence or a wall against the burning of the fire.) Mind, which is the most penetrating of all the divine thoughts, has for its body fire, the most penetrating of all the elements. And since mind is the craftsman of all beings, it uses fire as an instrument in its craftwork. The mind of all is the craftsman of all beings; the human mind is the craftsman only of the things that exist on earth. Since it is stripped of fire, the mind in humans is powerless to craft divine things because it is human in its habitation. [19] The human soul – not

every soul, that is, but only the reverent – is in a sense demonic and divine. Such a soul becomes wholly mind after getting free of the body and fighting the fight of reverence. (Knowing the divine and doing wrong to no person is the fight of reverence.) The irreverent soul, however, stays in its own essence, punishing itself, seeking an earthy body to enter – a human body, to be sure. For no other body contains a human soul; it is not allowed for a human soul to fall down into the body of an unreasoning animal. This is god's law, to protect the human soul against such an outrage."

[20] "How then, father, is a human soul punished?"

"What greater punishment for a human soul, my son, than irreverence? What fire burns as much as irreverence? What beast maims the body so ravenously as irreverence maims the very soul? Do you not see what tortures the irreverent soul suffers, howling and shrieking, 'I'm on fire, I'm burning; I don't know what to say or do; I'm eaten up, poor wretch, by the evils that possess me; I neither see nor hear.' Are these not the cries of a soul being punished? Do you, too, believe what they all think, my son, that the soul which has left the body becomes an animal? This is a great error. [21] For the soul is punished in this way: the mind, once it has become a demon, is directed to acquire a fiery body in order to serve god, and, having entered into the most irreverent soul, mind afflicts that soul with scourges of wrongdoing; thus scourged, the irreverent soul takes to murders and outrages and slanders and the diverse kinds of violence by which people do wrong. But when mind has entered a reverent soul, it leads it to the light of knowledge. Such a soul as this never has its fill of hymning and praising, always blessing all people and doing them good in every deed and word, in memory of its father."

[22] "Therefore, my child, one who gives thanks to god must pray to acquire a good mind. The soul can then pass over into something greater but not into any lesser thing. There is a community of souls: the souls of the gods commune with souls of humans, those of humans with souls of unreasoning things. The greater take charge of the lesser: gods of humans, humans of living things without reason, and god takes charge of them all. For he is greater than all of them, and all are less than he. Thus, the cosmos is subject to god, mankind to the cosmos and unreasoning things to mankind. God stands above all things and watches over them. And energies are like rays from god, natural forces like rays from the cosmos, arts and learning like rays from

mankind. Energies work through the cosmos and upon mankind through the natural rays of the cosmos, but natural forces work through the elements, and humans work through the arts and through learning. [23] And this is the government of the universe, dependent from the nature of the one and spreading through the one mind. Nothing is more godlike than ⟨mind⟩, nothing more active nor more capable of uniting humans to the gods and gods to humans; mind is the good demon. Blessed is the soul completely full of mind, wretched the soul completely empty of it."

"Again, my father, what do you mean?"

"Do you suppose, my child, that every soul possesses the good mind? Our present discourse concerns this mind, not the servile mind of which we spoke earlier, the one sent below by justice. [24] For without mind, soul

… can neither say
nor accomplish anything.

Mind often flies out of soul, and in that hour soul neither sees nor hears but acts like an animal without reason – so great is the power of mind. But in a sluggish soul mind cannot endure; it leaves such a soul behind as clinging to the body, held down and smothered by it. Such a soul, my child, does not possess mind, and so one must not say that such a thing is human. For the human is a godlike living thing, not comparable to the other living things of the earth but to those in heaven above, who are called gods. Or better – if one dare tell the truth – the one who is really human is above these gods as well, or at least they are wholly equal in power to one another."

[25] "For none of the heavenly gods will go down to earth, leaving behind the bounds of heaven, yet the human rises up to heaven and takes its measure and knows what is in its heights and its depths, and he understands all else exactly and – greater than all of this – he comes to be on high without leaving earth behind, so enormous is his range. Therefore, we must dare to say that the human on earth is a mortal god but that god in heaven is an immortal human. Through these two, then, cosmos and human, all things exist, but they all exist by action of the one."

XI
Mind to Hermes

[1] "Since people have said many contradictory things of all sorts about the universe and god, I have not learned the truth. Make the truth plain to me, master; it is you alone on whom I may depend to reveal it."

"Mark my words, then, Hermes Trismegistus, and remember what I say. I will not hesitate to speak what occurs to me. [2] [ ] Hear how it is with god and the universe, my child."

"God, eternity, cosmos, time, becoming."

"God makes eternity; eternity makes the cosmos; the cosmos makes time; time makes becoming. The essence (so to speak) of god is [the good, the beautiful, happiness,] wisdom; the essence of eternity is identity; of the cosmos, order; of time, change; of becoming, life and death. But the energy of god is mind and soul; the energy of eternity is permanence and immortality; of the cosmos, recurrence and counterrecurrence; of time, increase and decrease; of becoming, quality ⟨and quantity⟩. Eternity, therefore, is in god, the cosmos in eternity, time in the cosmos, and becoming in time. And while eternity has stood still in god's presence, the cosmos moves in eternity, time passes in the cosmos, but becoming comes to be in time."

[3] "The source of all things is god; eternity is their essence; the cosmos is their matter. Eternity is the power of god, and the cosmos is eternity's work, but the cosmos has never come into being; it comes to be forever from eternity. Therefore, nothing in the cosmos will ever be corrupted (for eternity is incorruptible), nor will it pass away since eternity encloses the cosmos."

"But the wisdom of god – what is it?"

"The good and the beautiful and happiness and all excellence and eternity. Eternity establishes an order, putting immortality and permanence into matter."

[4] “The becoming of that matter depends from eternity, just as eternity depends from god. Becoming and time, whose natures are twofold, exist in heaven and on earth: in heaven they are changeless and incorruptible, but on earth they change and become corrupt. And god is the soul of eternity; eternity is the soul of the cosmos; heaven is the soul of earth. God is in mind, but mind is in soul, and soul is in matter, yet all these exist through eternity. Inwardly, a soul full of mind and god fills this universal body in which all bodies exist, but outwardly soul surrounds the universe and brings it to life. Outwardly, the universe is this great and perfect living thing, the cosmos; inwardly, it is all living things. Above in heaven soul persists in its identity, but on earth below it changes what it comes to be.”

[5] “Eternity holds all this together, either through necessity or providence or nature or whatever else anyone believes or will believe. This universe is god producing his energy, but god’s energy is an insuperable power, not comparable to anything human or divine. Therefore, Hermes, you should not suppose that anything below or anything above is like god since you would stray from the truth: nothing is like the unlike, the one and the only. Nor should you suppose that god gives up his power to anyone else. Besides him, is there any maker of life and immortality ⟨and⟩ change? What else might he do ⟨but⟩ make? God is not idle, else everything would be idle, for each and every thing is full of god. Nowhere in the cosmos nor in any other thing is there idleness. Said of the one who makes or of one who comes into being, idleness is an empty word. [6] Everything must come to be, always and according to the inclination of each place. The one who makes exists in all things, not firmly fixed or making in any particular thing but making all things. Because he is an energetic power, his autonomy does not come from things that come to be; those that come to be exist by his agency.”

“Through me look out on the cosmos set before your gaze and observe its beauty carefully, a body undefiled, than which nothing is more ancient, always in its prime and young and yet even more in its prime. [7] And see the seven worlds spread out below, marshalled in eternal order, each completing eternity in a different circuit; see how everything is full of light, yet nowhere is there fire. The attracting and combining among things contrary and unlike became light shining down from the energy of the god who is father of all good, ruler and commander of the whole order of the seven worlds. Coursing ahead of them all is the moon, nature’s instrument, transforming the matter

below, and in the midst of the universe is the earth, the nurse who feeds terrestrial creatures, settled in the beautiful cosmos like sediment. Look at the multitude – how great it is – of immortal living beings and of the mortal, and in between the two, the immortal and the mortal, the circling moon. [8] All things are full of soul and all are moved, some around heaven, others about the earth. Those on the right do not go left; those on the left do not go right; those above do not go below, nor do those below go above. That all of them have come to be, dearest Hermes, you no longer need to learn from me. For they are bodies and they have a soul and they are moved, but body and soul cannot join in a single being without someone to bring them together. Such a one must exist, then, and must be one in all respects. [9] Since motions are many and diverse and bodies are dissimilar, while one speed has been ordained for all of them, there cannot be two makers or more than two. If there are many, one order cannot be kept. The consequence of plurality is envy of the better. I will explain: if there were a second maker of living things mortal and subject to change, he would long to make immortal beings as well, as the maker of immortals would wish to make mortals. Look – if there are two, and if matter is one and soul is one, which of them will supply the making? Or if both supply it, which has the greater part? [10] Think of it this way: Every living body, both immortal and mortal, (reasoning and) unreasoning, is composed of matter and soul. For all living bodies are ensouled. The non-living, on the other hand, consist of matter by itself; soul, likewise coming by itself from the maker, is the cause of life, but the one who makes the immortals causes all life. How, then, is he not also the maker of the mortal living things that differ from the {immortals}? How can an immortal being who makes immortality not make what is possessed by living things?"

[11] "Clearly, there is someone who makes these things, and quite evidently he is one, for soul is one, life is one and matter is one. But who is this someone? Who else but the one god? To whom, if not to god alone, might it belong to make ensouled living beings? God is one, then. {How entirely absurd!} Since you have agreed that the cosmos is always one, that the sun is one, the moon one and divinity one, do you propose to number god himself among them?"

[12] "God makes everything. {In a god who is many you have the ultimate absurdity.} And why is it a great accomplishment for god to make life and soul and immortality and change when you yourself make so many such

things? You see and you speak and you hear; you smell and touch and walk about and think and breathe. It is not as if one sees, another hears, another speaks; and someone else touches, someone else smells, walks about, thinks and breathes. One person does all these things. In another sense, things on high cannot happen without god. Just as you are no longer a living being if you are idle at your affairs, so, if god is idle, he is no longer god – though it is not right to say so."

[13] "If it has been proven that ⟨you⟩ can⟨not⟩ be without ⟨making⟩ something, how much truer is this of god? For if there is something that god does not make, he is imperfect – though it is not right to say so. But if god is perfect and not idle, then he makes everything."

"Give me just a moment, Hermes, and you shall quickly understand that god's work is one thing only: to bring all into being – those that are coming to be, those that have once come to be, those that shall come to be. This is life, my dearest friend. This is the beautiful; this is the good; this is god. [14] If you want to understand it from experience, notice what happens to you when you wish to beget; it is not like the work of god. God takes no pleasure in his work, nor does he have assistance in it. Working alone, he is in his work eternally since he is what he makes. If they were parted from it, all things would collapse; of necessity, all would die since there would be no life. But if all are alive and life is also one, then god, too, is one. Again, if all things are alive, those in heaven and also those on earth, and if life is one for all of them, it comes to be by god's agency and it is god. All things come to be by the agency of god, then, and life is the union of mind and soul. [15] Eternity, therefore, is an image of god; the cosmos is an image of eternity; and the sun is an image of the cosmos. The human is an image of the sun."

"Death is not the destruction of things that have been combined but the dissolution of their union. They say that change is death because the body is dissolved and life passes on to the unseen. {Hear me devoutly,} my dearest Hermes, when I say that the cosmos and the things said to be dissolved in this manner are changed because each day a part of the cosmos becomes unseen, ⟨but⟩ they are by no means dissolved. These are the passions of the cosmos, swirlings and concealments. The swirling is {a return} and the concealment a renewal. [16] The cosmos is omniform: it does not have forms inserted in it but changes them within itself. Since the cosmos came to be as omniform, who can have made it? Let us not call him formless. But if he, too, is

omniform, he will be like the cosmos. What if he has one form? In this respect he will be less than the cosmos. What do we say he is, then, so as not to bring our discourse to an impasse? For there can be no impasse in our understanding of god. Therefore, if he has any structure in him, it is one structure, incorporeal, that does not yield to appearances. And he reveals all structures through bodies."

[17] "Do not be surprised at the notion of an incorporeal structure, for it is like the structure of a word. Mountain ridges seem to stand out high in pictures, but in reality they are absolutely smooth and even. Be mindful of what I am saying, something rather daring but also quite true. Just as a human cannot live apart from life, neither can god exist without making the good. For in god this making is life and movement, as it were, moving all things and making them live."

[18] "Some things that I say need special attention. Consider what I am saying now. All things are in god but not as lying in a place (for place is also body, and body is immobile, and what is lying somewhere has no movement); in incorporeal imagination things are located differently. Consider what encompasses all things, that nothing bounds the incorporeal, that nothing is quicker nor more powerful. Of all things, the incorporeal is the unbounded, the quickest and most powerful."

[19] "Consider this for yourself: command your soul to travel to India, and it will be there faster than your command. Command it to cross over to the ocean, and again it will quickly be there, not as having passed from place to place but simply as being there. Command it even to fly up to heaven, and it will not lack wings. Nothing will hinder it, not the fire of the sun, nor the aether, nor the swirl nor the bodies of the other stars. Cutting through them all, it will fly to the utmost body. But if you wish to break through the universe itself and look upon the things outside (if, indeed, there is anything outside the cosmos), it is within your power."

[20] "See what power you have, what quickness! If you can do these things, can god not do them? So you must think of god in this way, as having everything – the cosmos, himself, ⟨the⟩ universe – like thoughts within himself. Thus, unless you make yourself equal to god, you cannot understand god; like is understood by like. Make yourself grow to immeasurable immensity, outleap all body, outstrip all time, become eternity and you will

understand god. Having conceived that nothing is impossible to you, consider yourself immortal and able to understand everything, all art, all learning, the temper of every living thing. Go higher than every height and lower than every depth. Collect in yourself all the sensations of what has been made, of fire and water, dry and wet; be everywhere at once, on land, in the sea, in heaven; be not yet born, be in the womb, be young, old, dead, beyond death. And when you have understood all these at once – times, places, things, qualities, quantities – then you can understand god."

[21] "But if you shut your soul up in the body and abase it and say, 'I understand nothing, I can do nothing; I fear the sea, I cannot go up to heaven; I do not know what I was, I do not know what I will be,' then what have you to do with god? While you are evil and a lover of the body, you can understand none of the things that are beautiful and good. To be ignorant of the divine is the ultimate vice, but to be able to know, to will and to hope is the {straight and} easy way leading to the good. As you journey, the good will meet you everywhere and will be seen everywhere, where and when you least expect it, as you lie awake, as you fall asleep, sailing or walking, by night or by day, as you speak or keep silent, for there is nothing that it is not."

[22] "And do you say, 'god is unseen'? Hold your tongue! Who is more visible than god? This is why he made all things: so that through them all you might look on him. This is the goodness of god, this is his excellence: that he is visible through all things. For nothing is unseen, not even among the incorporeals. Mind is seen in the act of understanding, god in the act of making."

"Up to this point, O Trismegistus, these matters have been revealed to you. Consider all the rest in the same way – on your own – and you will not be deceived."

XII
Discourse of Hermes Trismegistus: On the mind shared in common, to Tat

[1] "Mind, O Tat, comes from the very essence of god – if, in fact, god has any essence – and god alone knows exactly what that essence might be. Mind, then, has not been cut off from god's essentiality; it has expanded, as it were, like the light of the sun. In humans this mind is god; among humans, therefore, some are gods and their humanity is near to divinity. For the good demon has said that gods are immortal ⟨humans⟩ and humans are mortal gods. In animals without reason, however, there is natural impulse."

[2] "Where soul is there also is mind, just as there is soul wherever life is. But the soul in unreasoning animals is life devoid of mind. Mind is a benefactor of human souls; it works on them for good. In things without reason, mind assists the natural impulse arising from each, but it opposes this impulse in human souls. Every soul, as soon as it has come to be in the body, is depraved by pain and pleasure. For in a composite body pain and pleasure seethe like juices; once immersed in them, the soul drowns."

[3] "Mind displays its own splendor to those souls that it commands, and it opposes their predilections. As a good physician, using the cautery and the knife, causes pain to the body overtaken by disease, in the same way mind causes pain to the soul, withdrawing it from the pleasure that gives rise to every disease of the soul. A great disease of the soul is godlessness, and next is mere opinion; from them follow all evils and nothing good. Therefore, the mind that opposes this disease secures good for the soul, just as the physician secures health for the body. [4] But those human souls that do not have mind as a guide are affected in the same way as souls of animals without reason. When mind connives with them and gives way to longings, the rush of appetite drives such souls to the longings that lead to unreason and, like animals without reason, they never cease their irrational anger and irrational

longing, and they have never had enough of evil. For angers and longings are irrational vices that exceed all limits. God has imposed the law upon these souls as a torment and a reproof."

[5] "In that case, father, the discourse about fate that I heard finished earlier would seem to be contradicted. If it is absolutely fated for some individual to commit adultery or sacrilege or to do some other evil, how is such a person still to be punished [ ] when he has acted under compulsion of fate?"

"Everything is an act of fate, my child, and outside of it nothing exists among bodily entities. Neither good nor evil comes to be by chance. Even one who has done something fine is fated to be affected by it, and this is why he does it: in order to be affected by what affects him because he has done it. [6] Now is not the time for a discourse about vice or fate; we have spoken on these topics elsewhere. Now our discourse is about mind, what mind can do and how it admits of differences. In humans mind is one thing, but it is another in unreasoning animals. Moreover, in other living things mind is not beneficent. As it quells anger and longing, it acts differently in each individual, and one must understand that some of these are men who possess reason and that others are without it. But all people are subject to fate and also to birth and change, which are the beginning and the end of fate. [7] And what is fated affects all people. Yet those who possess reason, whom (as we have said) mind commands, are not affected as the others are. Since they have been freed from vice, they are not affected as a consequence of being evil."

"Again, father, what do you mean? The adulterer is not evil? The murderer not evil? And all the rest of them?"

"One who has reason will not be affected *because* he has committed adultery, my child, but *as if* he had done so, nor will he be affected *because* he has murdered but *as if* he had murdered. It is not possible to escape the quality of change any more than of birth, though it is possible for one who has mind to escape vice. [8] Thus, I have always heard the good demon say (it would have been most useful to humankind if he had given it out in writing; he alone, my child, because he looked down on everything as the firstborn god, has truly given voice to divine discourses), once, at any rate, I heard him say that all things are one, especially ⟨the⟩ intellectual bodies; that we

live in power and in energy and in eternity; also, that the mind of eternity is good and that its soul is good as well. This being so, there is nothing dimensional among intellectual beings, and thus, since mind rules all and is the soul of god, mind can do as it wishes. [9] You must understand, then, and apply this discourse to the question that you asked me before – the one about fate [⟨and⟩ mind], I mean. For if you carefully avoid contentious discourse, my child, you will find that mind, the soul of god, truly prevails over all, over fate and law and all else. And nothing is impossible for mind, neither setting a human soul above fate nor, if it happens that a soul is careless, setting it beneath fate. These were the finest things that the good demon said about such matters."

"Divinely said, my father, and truly and usefully. [10] But make it even plainer to me. You have said that mind acts in the manner of a natural impulse in animals without reason, conniving with their instincts. But the instincts of unreasoning animals are passions, I believe. If mind assists the instincts, and instincts are passions, is mind also a passion since it is in defiling contact with passions?"

"Well said, child – an excellent question and one I ought to answer. [11] All embodied incorporeals are affected by passions, my child, and 'passions' they are rightly called. Every mover is incorporeal, but ⟨not⟩ everything moved is body; incorporeals are also moved by mind. Movement is passion, however, and so both are affected, the mover and the moved, one ruling, the other ruled. If there is release from the body, there is also release from passion. Yet one might better say that nothing is free from passion, my child, and that everything is affected by it. But there is a difference between passion and what is affected by passion. One is active and the other passive. Even bodies act of themselves, however; they are either unmoved or moved, and here is passion in either case. The incorporeals are always acted upon, which is why they are affected by passion. Do not let this terminology disturb you. Action and passion are identical, but it does no harm to use the more auspicious name."

[12] "You have delivered the discourse very plainly, father."

"Notice this also, my child, that to mankind – but not to any other mortal animal – god has granted these two things, mind and reasoned speech, which are worth as much as immortality. [Mankind also has the speech that he

utters.] If one uses these gifts as he should, nothing will distinguish him from the immortals; instead, when he has left the body, both these gifts will guide him to the troop of the gods and the blessed."

[13] "The other living things, my father, do they not use speech?"

"No, child, they use only voice, and speech differs greatly from voice. Speech is common to all people, but each kind of living thing has its own voice."

"Even among humans, my father, does speech not differ for each nation?"

"It is different, my child, but humanity is one; therefore, speech is also one, and when translated it is found to be the same in Egypt and Persia as in Greece. My child, you seem to me to be ignorant of the excellence and importance of speech. The blessed god, the good demon, has said that soul is in body, that mind is in soul, that reasoned speech is in mind and that god is their father. [14] Reasoned speech, then, is the image and mind of god, as the body is the image of the idea and the idea is the image of the soul. Thus, the finest of matter is air, the finest air is soul, the finest soul is mind and the finest mind is god. And god surrounds everything and permeates everything, while mind surrounds soul, soul surrounds air and air surrounds matter."

"Necessity, providence and nature are instruments of the cosmos and of the order of matter. Each of the intellectual beings is an essence, and their essence is identity, but each of the bodies in the universe is multiple. Since composite bodies have their identity in always causing one body to change to another, they preserve the incorruptibility of identity. [15] Otherwise, for all composite bodies there is a number belonging to each. For without number, neither association nor composition nor dissolution can occur. The henads give birth to number, increase it and take it back to themselves after it has been dissolved, and yet the matter is one. This entire cosmos – a great god and an image of a greater, united with god and helping preserve the father's will and order – is a plenitude of life, and throughout the whole recurrence of eternity that comes from the father there is nothing in the cosmos that does not live, neither in the whole of it nor in its parts. For there never was any dead thing in the cosmos, nor is there, nor will there be. The father wished it to be alive as long as it holds together, and so it was necessary for the cosmos to be god. [16] How then, my child, can there be dead things in god, in the

image of all, in the plenitude of life? For deadness is corruption, and corruption is destruction. How can any part of the incorruptible be corrupted or anything of god be destroyed?"

"The things that live in the cosmos, father, though they are parts of it, do they not die?"

"Hold your tongue, child; the terminology of becoming leads you astray. They do not die, my child; as composite bodies they are only dissolved. Dissolution is not death but the dissolution of an alloy. They are dissolved not to be destroyed but to become new. And what is the energy of life? Is it not motion? In the cosmos, then, what is motionless? Nothing, my child."

[17] "Does the earth not seem motionless to you, father?"

"No, child; it is the only thing that is full of motion and also stationary. Would it not be quite absurd if the nurse of all were motionless, she who begets everything and gives birth to it? For without motion the begetter cannot beget anything. It is most absurd of you to ask if the fourth part is idle; that a body is motionless can signify nothing but being idle. [18] Therefore, my child, you should know that everywhere in the cosmos everything is moved, either by decrease or by increase. What is moved also lives, but not everything that lives need stay the same. Taken as a whole, my child, the entire cosmos is free from change, but its parts are all subject to change. Nothing, however, is corruptible or destroyed – terms that disturb human beings. Life is not birth but awareness, and change is forgetting, not death. Since this is so, all are immortal – matter, life, spirit, soul, mind – of which every living thing is constituted."

[19] "Through mind, then, every living thing is immortal, but most of all mankind, who is capable of receiving god and fit to keep company with him. With this living thing alone does god converse, at night through dreams and through omens by day, and through all of them he foretells the future, through birds, through entrails, through inspiration, through the oak tree, whereby mankind also professes to know what has been, what is at hand and what will be. [20] And notice this, my child, that each living thing frequents one part of the cosmos: water for those that live in the water, earth for those that dwell on land, air for those that float above. But mankind uses them all – earth, water, air, fire. He even sees heaven, which he grasps by sensing it. And

god, who is energy and power, surrounds everything and permeates everything, and understanding of god is nothing difficult, my child."

[21] "If you wish also to gaze upon him, look at the order of the cosmos and the careful arrangement of this order; look at the necessity of the heavenly phenomena and the providence in what has come to be and what comes to be; look at matter, completely full of life, and a great god moving along with all beings good and fair – gods and demons and humans."

"But these are energies, father."

"If they are entirely energies, my child, by whom are they energized? By ⟨anyone⟩ other ⟨than god⟩? Or do you not know that, just as the parts of the cosmos are heaven, water, earth and air, likewise the limbs ⟨of god⟩ are life, immortality, {fate}, necessity, providence, nature, soul and mind, and that the permanence of them all is called the good? In what comes to be and has come to be, there is nothing where god is not, nothing beyond him."

[22] "Is he in matter, then, father?"

"If matter is apart from god, my son, what sort of place would you allot to it? If it is not energized, do you suppose it is anything but a heap? But who energizes it if it is energized? We have said that the energies are parts of god. By whom, then, are all living things made alive? By whom are immortals made immortal? Things subject to change – by whom are they changed? Whether you say matter or body or essence, know that these also are energies of god and that materiality is the energy of matter, corporeality the energy of bodies and essentiality the energy of essence. And this is god, the all."

[23] "But in the all there is nothing that he is not. Hence, neither magnitude nor place nor quality nor figure nor time has any bearing on god. For god is all. And the all permeates everything and surrounds everything. Show this discourse reverence, my child, and keep it religiously. There is but one religion of god, and that is not to be evil."

XIII
A secret dialogue of Hermes Trismegistus on the mountain to his son Tat: On being born again, and on the promise to be silent

[1] "My father, you spoke indistinctly and in riddles when talking about divinity in the *General Discourses*; claiming that no one can be saved before being born again, you offered no revelation. But after you talked with me coming down from the mountain, I became your suppliant and asked to learn the discourse on being born again since, of all the discourses, this one alone I do not know. And you said you would deliver it to me when 'you were about to become a stranger to the cosmos.' I have prepared myself, and I have steeled my purpose against the deceit of the cosmos. Grant me what I need and give me – whether aloud or in secret – the (discourse on) being born again that you said you would deliver. I do not know what sort of womb mankind was born from, O Trismegistus, nor from what kind of seed."

[2] "My child, ⟨the womb⟩ is the wisdom of understanding in silence, and the seed is the true good."

"Who sows the seed, father? I am entirely at a loss."

"The will of god, my child."

"And whence comes the begotten, father? He does not share in my essence [ ]."

"The begotten will be of a different kind, a god and a child of god, the all in all, composed entirely of the powers."

"You tell me a riddle, father; you do not speak as a father to a son."

"Such a lineage cannot be taught my child, but god reminds you of it when he wishes."

[3] “Father, what you tell me is impossible and contrived, and so I want to respond to it straightforwardly: I have been born a son strange to his father’s lineage. Do not begrudge me, father; I am your lawful son. Tell me clearly the way to be born again.”

“What can I say, my child? I have nothing to tell except this: seeing { } within me an unfabricated vision that came from the mercy of god, I went out of myself into an immortal body, and now I am not what I was before. I have been born in mind. This thing cannot be taught, nor can it be seen through any elementary fabrication that we use here below. Therefore, the initial form even of my own constitution is of no concern. Color, touch or size I no longer have; I am a stranger to them. Now you see me with your eyes, my child, but by gazing with bodily sight you do ⟨not⟩ understand what ⟨I am⟩; I am not seen with such eyes, my child.”

[4] “You have driven me quite mad, father, and you have deranged my heart. Now I do not see myself.”

“My child, would that you, without sleep, had also passed out of yourself like those who dream in sleep.”

“Tell me this especially: Who is the progenitor of rebirth?”

“The child of god, primal man, by god’s will.”

[5] “Whatever remains, father, you have now made me speechless, bereft of what was in my heart before. I see that your size and its external aspect remain the same.”

“And in this you are deceived, for my mortal form changes daily, altered in time toward increase and decrease – as a deception.”

[6] “What is the true, then, Trismegistus?”

“The unsullied, my child, the unlimited, the colorless, the figureless, the indifferent, the naked-seeming, the self-apprehended, the immutable good, the incorporeal.”

“In reality, father, I have gone mad. Though I expected that you would make me wise, the awareness of this understanding in me has been blocked.”

“So it has, my child: what rises up like fire, falls down like earth, is moist like water and diffuses like air ⟨is subject to sensation; on the other hand⟩ if something is not hard, not moist, not tight, not volatile, how can you understand it through the senses – something understood only through its power and energy yet requiring one empowered to understand the birth in god?”

[7] “Am I without the power, then, father?”

“May it not be so, my child. Draw it to you, and it will come. Wish it, and it happens. Leave the senses of the body idle, and the birth of divinity will begin. Cleanse yourself of the irrational torments of matter.”

“Do I have tormenters in me, father?”

“More than a few, my child; they are many and frightful.”

“I am ignorant of them, father.”

“This ignorance, my child, is the first torment; the second is grief; the third is incontinence; the fourth, lust; the fifth, injustice; the sixth, greed; the seventh, deceit; the eighth, envy; the ninth, treachery; the tenth, anger; the eleventh, recklessness; the twelfth, malice. These are twelve in number, but under them are many more besides, my child, and they use the prison of the body to torture the inward person with the sufferings of sense. Yet they withdraw (if not all at once) from one to whom god has shown mercy, and this is the basis of rebirth, the means and method. [8] From here on, my child, keep silence and say nothing; if you do so, you will not obstruct the mercy that comes to us from god. Henceforth, my child, rejoice; the powers of god purify you anew for articulation of the word.”

“To us has come knowledge of god, and when it comes, my child, ignorance has been expelled. To us has come knowledge of joy, and when it arrives, grief will fly off to those who give way to it. [9] The power that I summon after joy is continence. O sweetest power! Let us receive her too, most gladly, child. As soon as she arrives, how she has repulsed incontinence! Now in fourth place I summon perseverance, the power opposed to lust. This next level, my child, is the seat of justice. See how she has expelled injustice, without a judgment. With injustice gone, my child, we have been made just. The sixth power that I summon to us is the one opposed

to greed – liberality. And when greed has departed, I summon another, truth, who puts deceit to flight. And truth arrives. See how the good has been fulfilled, my child, when truth arrives. For envy has withdrawn from us, but the good, together with life and light has followed after truth, and no torment any longer attacks from the darkness. Vanquished, they have flown away in a flapping of wings."

[10] "My child, you have come to know the means of rebirth. The arrival of the decad sets in order a birth of mind that expels the twelve; we have been divinized by this birth. Therefore, whoever through mercy has attained this godly birth and has forsaken bodily sensation recognizes himself as constituted of the intelligibles and rejoices."

[11] "Since god has made me tranquil, father, I no longer picture things with the sight of my eyes but with the mental energy that comes through the powers. I am in heaven, in earth, in water, in air; I am in animals and in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb; everywhere. But tell me this also: how is it that the torments of darkness, twelve in number, are repulsed by ten powers? By what means, Trismegistus?"

[12] "This tent – from which we also have passed, my child – was constituted from the zodiacal circle, which was in turn constituted of [ ] entities that are twelve in number, one in nature, omniform in appearance. To mankind's confusion, there are disjunctions among the twelve, my child, though they are unified when they act. (Recklessness is not separable from anger; they are indistinguishable.) Strictly speaking, then, it is likely that the twelve retreat when the ten powers (the decad, that is) drive them away. The decad engenders soul, my child. Life and light are unified when the number of the henad, of spirit, is begotten. Logically, then, the henad contains the decad, and the decad the henad."

[13] "Father, I see the universe and I see myself in mind."

"This, my child, is rebirth: no longer picturing things in three bodily dimensions…. through this discourse on being born again that I have noted down for you alone to avoid casting it all before the mob but [to give it] to those whom god himself wishes."

[14] "Tell me, father, does this body constituted of powers ever succumb to dissolution?"

“Hold your tongue; do not give voice to the impossible! Else you will do wrong, and your mind’s eye will be profaned. The sensible body of nature is far removed from essential generation. One can be dissolved, but the other is indissoluble; one is mortal, the other immortal. Do you not know that you have been born a god and a child of the one, as I, too, have?”

[15] “Father, I would like to hear the praise in the hymn which you said I should hear from the powers once I had entered the ogdoad, just as Poimandres foretold of the ogdoad.”

“That you hasten to strike the tent is good, child, for you have been purified. Poimandres, the mind of sovereignty, has transmitted to me no more than has been written down, knowing that on my own I would be able to understand everything, to hear what I want and to see everything, and he entrusted it to me to make something beautiful of it. Thus, the powers within me sing in all things as well.”

“I want to hear them, father, and I wish to understand them.”

[16] “Be still, my child; now hear a well-tuned hymn of praise, the hymn of rebirth. To divulge it was no easy choice for me except that I do it for you, at the end of everything. Hence, it cannot be taught; it is a secret kept in silence. Therefore, my child, stand in the open air, face the south wind when the setting sun descends, and bow down in adoration; when the sun returns, bow likewise toward the east. Be still, child.”

Singing the secret hymn: Formula IV

[17] “Let every nature in the cosmos attend the hearing of the hymn. Open, O earth; let every lock that bars the torrent open to me; trees, be not shaken. I am about to sing a hymn to the lord of creation, to the universe and to the one. Open, you heavens, and be still, you winds. Let god’s immortal circle attend my discourse. For I am about to sing a hymn to the one who created everything; who fixed the earth in place; who hung heaven above; who ordered the sweet water away from the ocean and toward land, the habitable and the uninhabitable, as the means of mankind’s nourishment and creation; who ordered fire to shine on gods and humans for their every use. Together

let us praise him, raised high above the heavens, creator of all nature. He is the mind's eye. May he accept praise from my powers."

[18] "Powers within me, sing a hymn to the one and the universe. Sing together, all you powers within me, for I wish it. Holy knowledge, you enlightened me; through you, hymning the intellectual light, I take joy in the joy of mind. Join me, all you powers, and sing the hymn. You also, continence, sing me the hymn. My justice, through me hymn the just. My liberality, through me hymn the universe. Truth, hymn the truth. Good, hymn the good. Life and light, praise passes from you and to you. I thank you, father, energy of the powers. I thank you, god, power of my energies; through me your word hymns you; through me, O universe, accept a speech offering, by ⟨my⟩ word. [19] This is what the powers within me shout; they hymn the universe; they accomplish what you wish; your counsel goes forth from you, and to you the universe returns. Accept a speech offering from all things. Life, preserve the universe within us; light, enlighten it; god, {spiritualize} it. For you, O mind, are a shepherd to your word, O spirit-bearer, O craftsman. [20] You are god! Your man shouts this through fire, through air, through earth, through water, through spirit, through your creatures. From your eternity I have won praise, and in your counsel I have found the rest I seek; I have seen, as you wished it."

"This praise that you have told, [21] father, I have also established in my cosmos."

"Say 'in the intellectual cosmos,' child."

"In the intellectual cosmos, father. I have the power; your hymn and your praise have fully illuminated my mind. I, too, wish to send praise to god from my own heart."

"Be not heedless, my child."

"I say what I see in my mind, father. To you, god, genarch of progeneration, I, Tat, send speech offerings. God – you, father; you, lord; you, mind – accept from me what speech you want. For everything is accomplished by your willing it."

"My child, send an acceptable sacrifice to god, the father of all, but also add 'through the word.'"

[22] “I thank you, father, {for approving the prayers that I have made}.”

“I rejoice that the truth has borne good fruit for you, my child, an undying crop. Now that you have learned it from me, promise to be silent about this miracle, child, and reveal the tradition of rebirth to no one lest we be accounted its betrayers. For each of us has done enough study – I the speaker, you the hearer. You know yourself and our father intellectually.”

XIV
From Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius, health of mind

[1] In your absence, my son Tat wanted to learn the nature of things as a whole, and he would allow me no delay. Because he is my son and a newcomer who but lately gained knowledge of them in each particular, I was forced to hold forth at some length so it would be easy for him to follow the explanation. To you, however, I wanted to write selectively on a few of the most important headings of what I told him, but I have given them a more mystical interpretation, suitable to someone of your greater age and learning in the nature of things.

[2] If all visible things have come to be and are coming to be; if those that are begotten come to be by another's agency, not of their own (the begotten are many or, rather, they are *all* visible things, all that are different and not alike); if, then, things that come to be come by another's agency, there is someone who makes them; and, if this someone is to be older than the begotten, he must be unbegotten. For I maintain that things begotten come to be by the agency of another; it is impossible, however, for anything to be older than all begotten entities unless it alone is unbegotten. [3] Also, such a one is stronger, unique, and alone truly wise in everything since none is older. In quantity, in magnitude, and in being different than what comes to be, such a one comes first, as also in the continuity of his making. Moreover, although things begotten are seen, he is unseen. And this is why he makes, in order to be seen. He is always making, so assuredly he is seen.

[4] This is the proper way to understand and, having understood, to be astonished and, having been astonished, to count oneself blessed for having recognized the father.

What is dearer than a true father? Who is this father, and how shall we recognize him? Is it right to dedicate to him alone the name "god" or "maker"

or “father” or even the three of them? “God,” because of his power? “Maker,” because of his action? “Father,” because of the good? He is power, certainly, since he is different from things that come to be, and he is activity in the coming to be of all things.

Therefore, after we have done with our loquacity and idle chatter, we must understand these two things: what comes to be and who makes it. Between them there is nothing, no third thing. [5] From all that you understand and all that you hear, remember these two and acknowledge that they are everything, reckoning no difficulty about things because they are above or below or divine or changeable or deep down. For the two are all there is, what comes to be and what makes it, and it is impossible to separate one from the other. No maker can exist without something that comes to be. Each of the two is just what it is; therefore, one is not to be parted from the other ⟨nor⟩ from itself.

[6] If the maker is nothing other than the making – solitary, simple, uncomposed – then necessarily the making happens of its own because the making that the maker does is generation, and it is impossible for all coming-to-be to come to be of its own; coming-to-be necessarily comes to be of another. Without the maker, the begotten neither comes to be nor is, for the one without the other completely loses its own nature from deprivation of the other. Thus, if one agrees that there exist two entities, what comes to be and what makes it, they are one in their unification, an antecedent and a consequent. The antecedent is the god who makes; the consequent is what comes to be, whatever it may be.

[7] You need not be on guard against the diversity of things that come to be, fearing to attach something low and inglorious to god. God’s glory is one, that he makes all things, and this making is like the body of god. There is nothing evil or shameful about the maker himself; such conditions are immediate consequences of generation, like corrosion on bronze or dirt on the body. The bronzesmith did not make the corrosion; the parents did not make the dirt; nor did god make evil. But the persistence of generation makes evil bloom like a sore, which is why god has made change, to repurify generation.

[8] Now if it is given to one and the same painter to make heaven, gods, earth, sea, humans, things without reason and things without soul, is it not

possible for god to make them? Oh, how foolish it is – ignorance concerning god! The strangest thing of all happens to such foolish people. While claiming to revere god and praise him, they do not know him because they do not attribute to him the making of all things, and, besides not knowing him, they profane him greatly by imputing to him conditions of disdain and impotence. If he does not make all things, it must be out of contempt or out of impotence that he does not make them – which is an irreverent notion. [9] For in god there is only one condition, the good, but one who is good is not contemptuous or impotent. This is what god is, the good, all power to make all things. All that is begotten has come to be by god's agency, by the agency of one who is good, in other words, of one able to make all things.

If you want to learn how he makes, how things come to be that come to be, it is given to you. Consider this lovely image that is very like him: [10] See a farmer casting seed upon the earth, here the wheat, there the barley, elsewhere seed of some other kind; see him planting the vine and the apple and other kinds of trees. In the same way, god sows immortality in heaven, change in the earth, life and motion in the universe. The things he sows are not many but few and easily numbered. In all, there are four of them, besides god himself and generation; in them exist the things that are.

XVI
Definitions of Asclepius to King Ammon on god, matter, vice, fate, the sun, intellectual essence, divine essence, mankind, the arrangement of the plenitude, the seven stars, and mankind according to the image

[1] I have sent you a long discourse, my king, as a sort of reminder or summary of all the others; it is not meant to agree with vulgar opinion but contains much to refute it. That it contradicts even some of my own discourses will be apparent to you. My teacher, Hermes – often speaking to me in private, sometimes in the presence of Tat – used to say that those reading my books would find their organization very simple and clear when, on the contrary, it is unclear and keeps the meaning of its words concealed; furthermore, it will be entirely unclear (he said) when the Greeks eventually desire to translate our language to their own and thus produce in writing the greatest distortion and unclarity. [2] But this discourse, expressed in our paternal language, keeps clear the meaning of its words. The very quality of the speech and the ⟨sound⟩ of Egyptian words have in themselves the energy of the objects they speak of.

Therefore, my king, in so far as you have the power (who are all powerful), keep the discourse uninterpreted, lest mysteries of such greatness come to the Greeks, lest the extravagant, flaccid and ⟨as it were⟩ dandified Greek idiom extinguish something stately and concise, the energetic idiom of (Egyptian) usage. For the Greeks have empty speeches, O king, that are energetic only in what they demonstrate, and this is the philosophy of the Greeks, an inane foolosophy of speeches. We, by contrast, use not speeches but sounds that are full of action.

[3] This established, I shall open the discourse by invoking god, the master, maker, father and container of the whole universe, the all who is one and the one who is all. For the plenitude of all things *is* one and *is in* one, not because the one duplicates itself but because both are one. Keep to this meaning carefully, my king, through the whole length of my discourse. If anyone sets his hand against what seems to be all and one and identical and tries to part it from the one – taking the term "all" to mean "multitude" rather than "plenitude" – he will be doing the impossible, breaking the all apart from the one and destroying the all. For all must be one, if in fact one exists (as it does) and never ceases to be one so that the plenitude is not broken apart.

[4] Look in the middlemost parts of the earth at the many founts of water and fire gushing forth. In the same place, one observes three natures, those of fire, of water and of earth, depending from one root. Hence, the earth has been believed to be a storehouse of all matter, sending forth supplies of matter and in return receiving substance from above. [5] In this way, the craftsman (I mean the sun) binds heaven to earth, sending essence below and raising matter above, attracting everything toward the sun and around it, offering everything from himself to everything, as he gives freely of the ungrudging light. For it is the sun whence good energies reach not only through sky and air but even to earth and down to the nethermost deep and abyss.

[6] But if there also exists some intellectual essence, it is the sun's mass, whose receptacle may be sunlight. Only the sun knows … of what this essence is composed or whence it flows since by location and nature it is near to the sun…. {We, who are forced to understand by guesswork, do not observe it.} [7] But a vision of the sun is not a matter of guesswork. Since it is the visual ray itself, the sun shines all around the cosmos with the utmost brilliance, on the part above and on the part below. For the sun is situated in the center of the cosmos, wearing it like a crown. Like a good driver, it steadies the chariot of the cosmos and fastens the reins to itself to prevent the cosmos going out of control. And the reins are these: life and soul and spirit and immortality and becoming. The driver slackens the reins to let the cosmos go, not far away (to tell the truth) but along with him. [8] In this way are all things crafted. The sun portions out eternal permanence to the immortals and feeds the immortal part of the cosmos with the rising light

emitted from its other side, the one that faces heavenward. But, with the light held in confinement as it shines all around inside the hollow of water and earth and air, the sun enlivens and awakens, with becoming and change, the things that live in these regions of the cosmos. [9] It brings transmutation and transformation among them, as in a spiral, when change turns one thing to another, from kind to kind, from form to form, crafting them just as it does the great bodies. For the permanence of every body is change: in an immortal body the change is without dissolution; in a mortal body there is dissolution. And this is what distinguishes immortal from mortal, mortal from immortal.

[10] Just as the sun's light is continuous, so also – both in location and supply – does its fecundity continue on and on without cease. Around the sun are many troops of demons looking like battalions in changing array. They are not far from the immortals though they dwell ⟨with mortals⟩. From on high, they have been assigned the territory of mankind, and they oversee human activity. What the gods enjoin them they effect through torrents, hurricanes, thunderstorms, fiery alterations and earthquakes; with famines and wars, moreover, they repay irreverence.
[11] Irreverence is mankind's greatest wrong against the gods: to do good is the gods' affair; to be reverent is mankind's; and the demons' is to assist. Whatever else humans dare to do – out of error or daring or compulsion (which they call fate) or ignorance – all these the gods hold guiltless. Irreverence alone is subject to judgment.

[12] For every kind, the sun is preserver and provider. Just as the intellectual cosmos that encompasses the sensible cosmos fills it by making it solid with changing and omniform appearances, so also the sun that encompasses all things in the cosmos strengthens and makes solid all of them that are generated, as it takes in those that are spent and dwindling away. [13] The sun sets in array the troop or, rather, troops of demons, which are many and changing, arrayed under the regiments of stars, an equal number of them for each star. Thus deployed, they follow the orders of a particular star, and they are good and evil according to their natures – their energies, that is. For energy is the essence of a demon. Some of them, however, are mixtures of good and evil.

[14] They have all been granted authority over the things of the earth and over the troubles of the earth, and they produce change and tumult collectively for cities and nations, individually for each person. They

reshape our souls to their own ends, and they rouse them, lying in ambush in our muscle and marrow, in veins and arteries, in the brain itself, reaching to the very guts.

[15] The demons on duty at the exact moment of birth, arrayed under each of the stars, take possession of each of us as we come into being and receive a soul. From moment to moment they change places, not staying in position but moving by rotation. Those that enter through the body into the two parts of the soul twist the soul about, each toward its own energy. But the rational part of the soul stands unmastered by the demons, suitable as a receptacle for god.

[16] Thus, if by way of the sun anyone has a ray shining upon him in his rational part (and the totality of those enlightened is a few), the demons' effect on him is nullified. For none – neither demons nor gods – can do anything against a single ray of god. All others the demons carry off as spoils, both souls and bodies, since they are fond of the demons' energies and acquiesce in them. {And it is this love that} misleads and is misled. So, with our bodies as their instruments, the demons govern this earthly government. Hermes has called this government "fate."

[17] The intelligible cosmos, then, depends from god and the sensible cosmos from the intelligible, but the sun, through the intelligible cosmos and the sensible as well, is supplied by god with the influx of good, with his craftsmanship, in other words. Around the sun are the eight spheres that depend from it: the sphere of the fixed stars, the six of the planets, and the one that surrounds the earth. From these spheres depend the demons, and then, from the demons, humans. And thus all things and all persons are dependent from god.

[18] Therefore, the father of all is god; their craftsman is the sun; and the cosmos is the instrument of craftsmanship. Intelligible essence governs heaven; heaven governs the gods; and demons posted by the gods govern humans. This is the army of gods and demons. [19] Through them god makes everything for himself, and all things are parts of god. But if all things are parts of god, then all things are god, and he makes himself in making all things. His making can never cease because he is ceaseless. And as god has no end, so his making has neither beginning nor end.

XVII

"…if you think about it, O king, incorporeals also exist among the corporeals."

"What kind?" asked the king.

"Bodies that appear to be in mirrors seem incorporeal to you, do they not?"

"Yes, Tat, they do; your understanding is godlike," said the king.

"But there are also other incorporeals: doesn't it seem to you, for example, that there are forms that appear in body even though they are incorporeal, in the bodies not only of ensouled beings but of the soulless also?"

"You put it well, Tat."

"Thus, there are reflections of the incorporeals in corporeals and of corporeals in incorporeals – from the sensible to the intelligible cosmos, that is, and from the intelligible to the sensible. Therefore, my king, adore the statues, because they, too, possess forms from the intelligible cosmos."

Rising, the king then said, "It is time that I attend to my guests, O prophet; tomorrow we shall theologize further."

XVIII
On the soul hindered by the body's affections

[1] If someone promises to bring harmony out of a piece of music played on many instruments, his effort will be laughable if during the performance discord among the instruments hinders his zeal. Since weak instruments are altogether unequal to the task, inevitably the spectators will jeer at the musician. Indeed, while this well-meaning person gives tirelessly of his art, ⟨the hearer⟩ finds fault with the weakness of the instruments. He who is truly a musician [ ] by nature, not only producing harmony in song but also providing the rhythm of the music appropriate to each instrument, this tireless musician is god, for it does not befit god to tire. [2] If ever a performer wanted to excel in a musical contest, entering just after the trumpeters had likewise shown their skill, after the flautists had produced sweet music on their melodious instruments, after ⟨others⟩ had finished the singing of the song with reed-pipe and plectrum, no one would blame the musician's inspiration ⟨if his instrument failed under the strain⟩, nor would they blame the almighty, to whom they would render due honor while finding fault with the defective instrument because, in fact, it created a hindrance to greater beauty by hindering the musician's rapport with the music and robbing the audience of sweet song.

[3] With us it is the same. Let no spectator irreverently find fault with our kind for weakness that belongs to the body. Let it be known, however, that god is a tireless inspiration, who always and in the same way possesses the skill appropriate to him, whose blessings are uninterrupted, who continually enjoys the same kind attentions. [4] If even the craftsman Phidias used material that did not yield to his striving for consummate diversity … ⟨and⟩ our musician could only make the best of his ability, let us not put the blame on him but find fault with the weak string that [slackened the tension,] lowered the tone and muffled the rhythm of the lovely music.

[5] But no one ever blames the musician for an accident that happened to his instrument. And the more they reproach the instrument, the more they extol the musician when he strikes the string and hits the right tone … so the audience feels even friendlier to the musician and finds nothing to blame him for, after all.

{So it is with you also, most honored ones: you, in turn, should tune the inward lyre and adjust it to the ⟨divine⟩ musician.} [6] But I see it now: some performer readies himself for a composition of great genius and, even without playing his lyre, he somehow uses himself as an instrument and finds some secret way to tune his string and heal it, stunning his audience by turning something deficient into something magnificent. [ ] They say that a certain player on the cithara, dear to the patron god of music-making, once entered a contest of singing to the cithara, but when a string broke he was hindered in his exertions until his dearness to the mighty one restored the string for him and granted him the grace of fame. In place of the string, a providence of the mighty one caused a cicada to light upon the cithara and restore the song by keeping the space where the string had been. Thus, the citharaplayer won a victor's reputation when his string was mended and his grief came to an end.

[7] Somehow, I feel the same thing happening to me as well. Most honored sirs, just recently it was as if I confessed my weakness and lay sick for a little while, yet now by the power of the mighty one, as it were, my song about the king has been restored and I made music. Accordingly, the aim of the assistance will be the renown of kings, and from their trophies arises the zeal of my discourse. Come, then, let us proceed, for this is the musician's desire. [Come, make haste! This is the musician's will.] This is why he tuned his lyre. His song will be sweeter and his playing more pleasant as instructions require greater music.

[8] Therefore, since he has tuned his lyre specially for kings, since it has a panegyric tone, since its aim is to commend royalty, he raises his voice first to the supreme king of all, the good god, and, after he has opened his song on high, in its second section he descends to those who bear the sceptre in god's image. Kings themselves find it pleasing that the song moves down step by step from on high and that it comes from the very place where victory was conferred on them, victory from which, in their turn, our hopes also derive. [9] So then, let the musician approach the supreme king, the god of all: he is

ever immortal, eternal in having dominion from eternity, first in glorious victory, source of all victories for ⟨those who⟩ have received victory in due course… . [10] Our discourse hastens to descend to such commendation, to commend kings who are princes of the common security and peace. Authority from god almighty long since rose to a height in them; victory was conferred on them from the right hand of god; prizes were prepared for them even before they performed heroic deeds in battle; trophies were set up for them before they engaged the enemy; it was ordained for them not only to be kings but also to be the best; and, even before an army moves, they panic the barbarian.

On praise for the almighty and a royal panegyric

[11] My discourse hastens on to make an ending suited to its beginning, to conclude by praising the almighty and then also to praise kings who are most divine, the arbiters of our peace. Just as we began with the almighty and the power above, so shall we make our ending revert to the beginning and refer again to the almighty itself. The sun, nourisher of all that grows, harvests the first pick of the crops as it first rises, using its rays like great hands to gather in the crops, and the rays that are its hands gather in the most ambrosial ⟨effluences⟩ of the plants; in just this way, since we have taken our beginning from the almighty and have received the effluence of his wisdom and have used it up in growing the supercelestial plants that are our souls, we must go back again and exercise the praise from which he will water every shoot that we plant.

[12] To god, ⟨then,⟩ who is entirely undefiled, who is father of our souls, it is fitting that praise should rise up from ten thousand mouths and voices, even if one can say nothing worthy of him because our speech is no match for him; the newborn cannot sing a hymn worthy of their father, yet if they render him as much of his due as their strength permits, then they also will be forgiven. Moreover, this very fact contributes to god's renown: that he is greater than his own progeny, and that the preface, beginning, middle and end of our praises are to confess our father's limitless power and limitless extent. [13] [For the king it is just the same.]

Praising god is in our nature as humans because we happen to be in some sense his descendants, but we must ask forgiveness even if for the most part it comes from the father before the asking. A father cannot turn away newborn infants because they lack strength; no, he delights in their coming to know him; in the same way, the knowledge of the universe that confers on everything life as well as the praise of god that god has presented to us. … [14] God, who is good and evershining, who always contains within him the limit of his own eminence, who is immortal, who encompasses within himself the endless portion allotted to him, who always keeps flowing from the energy there above to the cosmos here below and makes the promise that leads to the praise that saves…. There above, then, beings are not different from one another, nor does inconstancy exist there above. All think one thought, and all have the same foreknowledge; they have one mind, the father. One sense works in them, and the charm that brings them together is love, the same love that makes one harmony act in all things.

[15] Therefore, let us praise god, but next let us descend to those who have received their sceptres from him. We began with kings, and the practice we had with them also accustomed us to giving panegyrics and singing reverent hymns to the almighty, so we must first begin our praise with god and use it as training and then exercise the training through god; the purpose is to have in us the exercise of reverence for god as well as praise for kings. [16] We must also render them compensation for spreading before us the prosperity that comes of such great peace. A king's virtue – indeed, his name alone – is the arbiter of peace. For a king is so called from the light step with which he sets his foot even upon the highest authority, because he achieves dominion over the discourse that brings peace, and because he was born to outdo barbarian kingship inasmuch as his name is the token of peace. Accordingly, a king's challenge has often caused the enemy's withdrawal. Even statues of the king are havens of peace for the tempest-tost; the sight alone of a king's image has brought quick victory and, if it stands unthreatened and undamaged, has protected those who stand by it.

ASCLEPIUS
To me this Asclepius is like the sun. A Holy Book of Hermes Trismegistus addressed to Asclepius

[1] "God, Asclepius, god has brought you to us so that you might join in a divine discourse, such a discourse as, in justice, seems more divine in its reverent fidelity than any we have had before, more than any that divine power inspired in us. If you are seen to understand it, your whole mind will be completely full of all good things – assuming that there are many goods and not one good in which all are. Admittedly, the one is consistent with the other: all are of one or all are one, for they are linked so that one cannot be separated from the other. But you will learn this by careful concentration from the discourse to come. Now go out for a moment, Asclepius, and call Tat to join us."

When Tat came in, Asclepius suggested that Hammon also join them. Trismegistus said: "No jealousy keeps Hammon from us; indeed, we recall having written many things in his name, as we have also written so much on physical and popular topics for Tat, our dearest and most loving son. But this treatise I shall write in your name. Call no one but Hammon lest the presence and interference of the many profane this most reverent discourse on so great a subject, for the mind is irreverent that would make public, by the awareness of the many, a treatise so very full of the majesty of divinity."

When Hammon had also come into the sanctuary, the reverence of the four men and the divine presence of god filled that holy place; duly silent, the minds and thoughts of each of them waited respectfully for a word from Hermes, and then divine love began to speak.

[2] "Every human soul is immortal, Asclepius, but not all in the same way; some differ in manner and time from others."

"Is it not true, Trismegistus, that every soul is of the same quality?"

“Asclepius, how quickly you have lapsed from reason’s true restraint! Did I not say that all are one and one all inasmuch as all were in the creator before he created them all? Not unjustly was he called all, whose members are all. In this whole discussion, then, take care to remember him who alone is all or who is himself the creator of all.”

“From the heavens all things come into earth and water and air. Only the fire that moves upward is lifegiving; what moves down is subservient to it. But whatever descends from on high is a breeder; what diffuses upward is a feeder. Earth, who alone stands still in herself, is the receptacle of all and the renewer of all the kinds that she takes in. Therefore, this is the whole – as you remember – because it is all and consists of all. Soul and matter, embraced by nature, are so stirred by the varied multiform quality of all images that, in the discontinuity of their qualities, the forms are known to be infinite, yet they are united to this end: that the whole might seem to be one and that all might seem to be from one. [3] The elements by which the whole of matter has been formed, then, are four: fire, water, earth, air. One matter, one soul and one god.”

“Now give me your whole attention, all your strength of mind, all your clever ingenuity. Giving an account of divinity, whose knowing needs a godlike concentration of consciousness, is most like a river running in torrent from a height, sweeping, plunging, so that its rapid rush outraces our concentration, not only as we listen but even as we teach.”

“The heavens, a perceptible god, administer all bodies whose growth and decline have been charged to the sun and moon. But god, who is their maker, is himself governor of heaven and of soul itself and of all things that are in the world. From all these, all governed by the same god, a continuous influence carries through the world and through the soul of all kinds and all forms throughout nature. God prepared matter as a receptacle for omniform forms, but nature, imaging matter with forms by means of the four elements, causes all things to reach as far as heaven so that they will be pleasing in the sight of god.”

[4] “All things that depend from above, however, are divided into forms in the way that I am about to explain. Forms of all things follow kinds, so that the kind is the entirety while the form is a smaller part of the kind. Thus, the kind made up of gods will produce from itself the forms of gods. The kind

made up of demons, as that of humans and likewise birds and all things that the world contains, breeds forms resembling itself. There is another kind of living thing, a kind without soul yet not lacking senses; it thus finds joy in good treatment, harm and weakness in adversity. I am speaking of all those things that come to life in the earth when their roots and stems are undamaged; their forms have been scattered all over the earth. Heaven itself is full of god. The aforesaid kinds, however, dwell as far as the places that belong to its forms, and the forms of all these things are immortal. Now a form is part of a kind, as a human is of humanity, and it must follow the quality of its kind. Whence, although all kinds are immortal, it happens that not all forms are immortal. In the case of divinity, both kind and form are immortal. The fertility of coming to be preserves the kinds of other things, where eternity belongs to the kind even though the forms perish. Thus, there are mortal forms, ⟨but not kinds,⟩ so that a human is mortal and humanity immortal."

[5] "However, the forms of all kinds combine with all kinds; some were made before; some are made from those that were made. Those made by gods or by demons or by humans are all forms closely resembling their kinds. It is impossible for bodies to be shaped without divine assent, for forms to be figured without the aid of demons, and without humans soulless things cannot be started and kept going. Therefore, because they are conjoined to some form of a divine kind, any demons who by chance drop down from their kind into a form are considered godlike by nearness and association. But those demons are called friendly to humans whose forms persist in the quality of their kind. For humans the pattern is similar but broader. The form of humankind is multiform and various: coming down from association with the ⟨higher form⟩ just described, it makes many conjunctions with all other forms and, of necessity, makes them with almost everything. Hence, one who has joined himself to the gods in divine reverence, using the mind that joins him to the gods, almost attains divinity. And one who has been joined to the demons attains their condition. Human are they who remain content with the middle status of their kind, and the remaining forms of people will be like those kinds to whose forms they adjoin themselves."

[6] "Because of this, Asclepius, a human being is a great wonder, a living thing to be worshipped and honored: for he changes his nature into a god's, as if he were a god; he knows the demonic kind inasmuch as he recognizes that

he originated among them; he despises the part of him that is human nature, having put his trust in the divinity of his other part. How much happier is the blend of human nature! Conjoined to the gods by a kindred divinity, he despises inwardly that part of him in which he is earthly. All others he draws close to him in a bond of affection, recognizing his relation to them by heaven's disposition. He looks up to heaven. He has been put in the happier place of middle status so that he might cherish those beneath him and be cherished by those above him. He cultivates the earth; he swiftly mixes into the elements; he plumbs the depths of the sea in the keenness of his mind. Everything is permitted him: heaven itself seems not too high, for he measures it in his clever thinking as if it were nearby. No misty air dims the concentration of his thought; no thick earth obstructs his work; no abysmal deep of water blocks his lofty view. He is everything, and he is everywhere."

"Of all these kinds, the ensouled have roots reaching them from on high to below, but living things without soul branch from a root that grows from beneath to above. Some things are nourished on composite food, others on simple food. The types of food are two: one for the soul, the other for the body – the two substances of which living things consist. Soul feeds on the ever restless stirring of the world. Bodies grow on water and earth, foods of the lower world. The spirit that fills all mixes with everything and enlivens everything. And in humans consciousness is added to understanding: only this fifth part, granted to humanity, comes from the aether. Of all living things, consciousness equips only the human, exalts it, raises it up to understand the divine plan. But since I am reminded to speak about consciousness, I shall also set forth an account of it for you a little later. It is a great subject and very holy, no less than an account of divinity itself."

"But now let me finish for you what I began. [7] At the very beginning I was speaking of that conjunction with the gods which only humans enjoy fully because the gods esteem them – those humans who have gained so much happiness that they grasp the divine consciousness of understanding, the diviner consciousness that is only in god and in human understanding."

"Is consciousness not uniform in all people, Trismegistus?"

"Not all have gained true understanding, Asclepius. They are deceived, pursuing, on rash impulse and without due consideration of reason, an image that begets malice in their minds and transforms the best of living things into

a beastly nature with brutal habits. When I speak about spirit, I will give you a full account of consciousness and related topics."

"Mankind is the only living thing that is twofold: one part of him is simple, what the Greeks call *ousiōdēs*, what we call a form of divine likeness. What the Greeks call *hulikos* and we call earthly is fourfold. From it is made the body that covers over what we have already termed divine in mankind; it covers the divinity of pure mind, which rests alone with its kindred, the thoughts of pure mind, at peace with itself as if sheltered by a wall of body."

"Why then, Trismegistus, should humans have been put in the world? Why do they not live in the highest happiness in the region where god is?"

"You are right to ask, Asclepius. Indeed, we beseech god to grant us the strength to find a reason for it. Although everything depends on god's will, those things especially depend on it that concern the summit of the all, the all whose reason we seek in our present inquiry."

[8] "Listen, then, Asclepius. When the master and shaper of all things, whom rightly we call god, made a god next after himself who can be seen and sensed (I call this second god sensible not because he senses but because he impinges on the senses of those who see him; at another time we shall discuss whether he senses or not), then, having made this god as his first production and second after himself, it seemed beautiful to him since it was entirely full of the goodness of everything, and he loved it as the progeny of his own divinity. Then, so great and good was he that he wanted there to be another to admire the one he had made from himself, and straightaway he made mankind, imitator of his reason and attentiveness. God's will is itself perfect achievement since willing and achievement are complete for him at one and the same moment of time. After he ⟨had made⟩ mankind *ousiōdēs* and noticed that he could not take care of everything unless he was covered over with a material wrapping, god covered him with a bodily dwelling and commanded that all humans be like this, mingling and combining the two natures into one in their just proportions. Thus god shapes mankind from the nature of soul and of body, from the eternal and the mortal, in other words, so that the living being so shaped can prove adequate to both its beginnings, wondering at heavenly beings and worshipping them, tending earthly beings and governing them."

"Just now, in speaking about mortal things, I mean to speak not about water and earth, those two of the four elements that nature has made subject to humans, but about what humans make of those elements or in them – agriculture, pasturage, building, harbors, navigation, social intercourse, reciprocal exchange – the strongest bond among humans or between humanity and the parts of the world that are water and earth. Learning the arts and sciences and using them preserves this earthly part of the world; god willed it that the world would be incomplete without them. Necessity follows god's pleasure; result attends upon his will. That anything agreed by god should become disagreeable to him is incredible since he would have known long before that he would agree and that it was to be."

[9] "But I notice, Asclepius, that mind's quick desire hastens you to learn how mankind can cherish heaven ⟨or the things in it⟩ and tend to its honor. Listen, then, Asclepius. Cherishing the god of heaven and all that heaven contains means but one thing: constant assiduous service. Except for mankind alone, no living thing, neither divine nor ⟨mortal⟩, has done this service. Heaven and heavenly beings take delight in wonderment, worship, praise and service from humans. Rightly the supreme divinity sent the chorus of Muses down to meet mankind lest the earthly world lack sweet melody and seem thereby less civilized; instead, with songs set to music, humans praised and glorified him who alone is all and is father of all, and thus, owing to their praise of heaven, earth has not been devoid of the charms of harmony. Some very small number of these humans, endowed with pure mind, have been allotted the honored duty of looking up to heaven. But those who lagged behind ⟨at⟩ a lower reach of understanding, under the body's bulk and because theirs is a mingled twofold nature, have been appointed to care for the elements and these lower objects. Mankind is a living thing, then, but none the lesser for being partly mortal; indeed, for one purpose his composition seems perhaps fitter and abler, enriched by mortality. Had he not been made of both materials, he would not have been able to keep them both, so he was formed of both, to tend to earth and to cherish divinity as well."

[10] "Asclepius, I want you to grasp the theory that follows, not only through thoughtful concentration but also with an energetic attitude. The theory seems incredible to most, but holier minds should grasp it as sound and true. Now let me begin."

"The master of eternity is the first god, the world is second, mankind is third. God is maker of the world and all it contains, governing all things along with mankind, who governs what is composite. Taking responsibility for the whole of this – the proper concern of his attentiveness – mankind brings it about that he and the world are ornaments to one another so that, on account of mankind's divine composition, it seems right to call him a well-ordered world, though *kosmos* in Greek would be better. Mankind knows himself and knows the world: thus, it follows that he is mindful of what his role is and of what is useful to him; also, that he recognizes what interests he should serve, giving greatest thanks and praise to god and honoring his image but not ignoring that he, too, is the second image of god, who has two images, world and mankind. Whence, though mankind is an integral construction, it happens that in the part that makes him divine, he seems able to rise up to heaven, as if from higher elements – soul and consciousness, spirit and reason. But in his material part – consisting of fire (and earth,) water and air – he remains fixed on the ground, a mortal, lest he disregard all the terms of his charge as void and empty. Thus, humankind is divine in one part, in another part mortal, residing in a body."

[11] "For him – for mankind, that is – and for the sum of his parts, the ultimate standard is reverence, from which goodness follows. Goodness is deemed perfect only when fortified by the virtue of disdain, which repels desire for every alien thing. Any earthly possessions owned out of bodily desire are all alien to every part of his divine kinship. To name such things 'possessions' is correct because they do not come to be *with* us but come to be possessed *by* us later on, wherefore we call them by the name 'possessions.' Everything of this kind, then, is alien to mankind, even the body, and we should despise both the things we yearn for and the source within us of the vice of yearning. The aim of the argument leads me to think that mankind was bound to be (human) only to this extent, that by contemplating divinity he should scorn and despise that mortal part joined to him by the need to preserve the lower world. Now in order for mankind in both his parts to have all that he can, note that he was formed with a quaternary of elements in either part: with pairs of hands and feet and other bodily members to serve the lower or earthly world; and with those four faculties of thought, consciousness, memory and foresight by means of which he knows all things divine and looks up to them. Hence, searching warily, mankind hunts in things for variations, qualities, effects and quantities, and

yet, because the heavy and excessive vice of body slows him down, he cannot rightly discern the true causes of their nature.

Therefore, given that mankind was made and shaped in this way and that the supreme god appointed him to such duty and service, if he observes the worldly order in an orderly way, if he adores god faithfully, complying duly and worthily with god's will in both its aspects, with what prize do you believe such a being should be presented? (Seeing that the world is god's work, one who attentively preserves and enriches its beauty conjoins his own work with god's will when, lending his body in daily work and care, he arranges the scene formed by god's divine intention.) Is it not the prize our parents had, the one we wish – in most faithful prayer – may be presented to us as well if it be agreeable to divine fidelity: the prize, that is, of discharge and release from worldly custody, of loosing the bonds of mortality so that god may restore us, pure and holy, to the nature of our higher part, to the divine?"

[12] "What you say is right and true, Trismegistus."

"Yes, this is the payment for those who live faithfully under god, who live attentively with the world. For the unfaithful it goes differently: return to heaven is denied them, and a vile migration unworthy of a holy soul puts them in other bodies."

"As the pattern of your discourse has developed, Trismegistus, it seems that souls run a great risk in this earthly life regarding hope of eternity to come."

"Of course, but some find this incredible, others fictitious, others laughable perhaps. For in this bodily life the pleasure one takes from possessions is a delight, but this delight, as they say, is a noose round the soul's neck that keeps mankind tied to the part that makes him mortal, nor does the malice that begrudges immortality let him acknowledge the part of divinity in him. Speaking as a prophet, I will tell you that after us will remain none of that simple regard for philosophy found only in the continuing reflection and holy reverence by which one must recognize divinity. The many make philosophy obscure in the multiplicity of their reasoning."

"What is it that the many do to make philosophy incomprehensible? How do they obscure it in the multiplicity of their reasoning?"

[13] “In this way, Asclepius: by combining it through ingenious argument with various branches of study that are not comprehensible – *arithmōtikō* and music and geometry. Pure philosophy that depends only on reverence for god should attend to these other matters only to wonder at the recurrence of the stars, how their measure stays constant in prescribed stations and in the orbit of their turning; it should learn the dimensions, qualities and quantities of the land, the depths of the sea, the power of fire and the nature and effects of all such things in order to commend, worship and wonder at the skill and mind of god. Knowing music is nothing more than being versed in the correct sequence of all things together as allotted by divine reason. By divine song, this sequencing or marshalling of each particular thing into a single whole through reason’s craftwork produces a certain concord – very sweet and very true.”

[14] “Accordingly, the people who will come after us, deceived by the ingenuity of sophists, will be estranged from the true, pure and holy philosophy. To adore the godhead with simple mind and soul and to honor his works, also to give thanks to god’s will (which alone is completely filled with good), this is a philosophy unprofaned by relentlessly curious thinking.”

“And this is our account of these topics. From this point let us begin the treatment of spirit and related matters.”

“There was god and *hulō* (which we take as the Greek for ‘matter’), and attending matter was spirit, or rather spirit was in matter, but it was not in matter as it was in god nor as the things from which the world came were in god. Because these things had not come to be, they were not as yet, but by then they already were in that from which they had their coming to be. Not only of those that have not yet come to be, but also of those that lack the fertility for breeding so that nothing can come to be from them, is it said that they do not produce being. Therefore, things can breed that have in them a nature capable of breeding; something can come to be from them even though they have come to be from themselves (for there is no doubt that the things from which all come to be can easily come to be from those that have come to be from themselves). The everlasting god, god eternal, neither can nor could have come to be – that which is, which was, which always will be. This is the nature of god, then, which is wholly from itself.”

"But *hulō* (or the nature of matter) and spirit, though from the beginning they seem not to have come to be, nonetheless possess in themselves the power and nature of coming to be and procreating. For the beginning of fertility is in the quality of nature, which possesses in itself the power and the material for conceiving and giving birth. Nature, therefore, can breed alone without conceiving by another."

[15] "By contrast, things that have the power to conceive only by coupling with natures outside themselves must be divided in such a way that the place of the world along with its contents are seen not to have come to be – which place in any event has in itself the power of the whole of nature. 'Place' I call that in which all things are, for none of them could have been, lacking a place to keep them all (a place must be provided for everything that is to be); the fact is, that if things were nowhere, one could not distinguish their qualities, quantities, positions or effects."

"Therefore, although matter did not come to be, it nonetheless has in itself the natures of all things inasmuch as it furnishes them most fertile wombs for conceiving. The whole of matter's quality, then, is to be creative, even though it was not created. Just as there is a fertile quality in the nature of matter, so also is the same matter equally fertile in malice."

[16] "Thus, Asclepius and Hammon, I have not said what the many say: 'Was god not able to put an end to evil and banish it from nature?' One need not respond to them at all, but for your sake I shall pursue this question as well since I have opened it, and I will give you an answer. Now these people say that god should have freed the world of every kind of evil, yet evil is so much in the world that it seems almost to be an organ of the world. Acting as reasonably as possible, the supreme god took care to provide against evil when he deigned to endow human minds with consciousness, learning and understanding, for it is these gifts alone, by which we surpass other living things, that enable us to avoid the tricks, snares and vices of evil. He that avoids them on sight, before they entangle him, that person has been fortified by divine understanding and foresight, for the foundation of learning resides in the highest good."

"Spirit supplies and invigorates all things in the world; like an instrument or a mechanism it is subject to the will of the supreme god. For now let this be our understanding of these issues."

"Understood by mind alone, the god called 'supreme' is ruler and governor of that sensible god who encloses within him all place, all the substance of things, all the matter of things that produce and procreate, all that there is whatsoever and however much there is. [17] But spirit stirs and governs all the forms in the world, each according to the nature allotted it by god. *Hulō* or matter, however, receives them all, ⟨spirit⟩ stirs and concentrates them all, and god governs them, apportioning to all things in the world as much as each one needs. He fills them all with spirit, breathing it into each thing according to the quality of its nature."

"This hollow of the world, round like a sphere, cannot itself, because of its quality or shape, be wholly visible. Choose any place high on the sphere from which to look down, and you cannot see bottom from there. Because of this, many believe that it has the same quality as place. They believe it is visible after a fashion, but only through shapes of the forms whose images seem to be imprinted when one shows a picture of it. In itself, however, the real thing remains always invisible. Hence, the bottom – {if it is a part or a place} in the sphere – is called *Haidōs* in Greek because in Greek 'to see' is *ideiti*, and there is no-seeing the bottom of a sphere. And the forms are called 'ideas' because they are visible forms. The ⟨regions⟩ called *Haidōs* in Greek because they are deprived of visibility are called 'infernar in Latin because they are at the bottom of the sphere."

"Such, then, are the original things, the primeval things, the sources or beginnings of all, as it were, for all are in them or through them or from them."

[18] "All these of which you speak, Trismegistus, what are they?"

"The whole substance of all the forms in the world and of each one of them in its normal state is, if I may say so, 'material.' Matter nourishes bodies; spirit nourishes souls. But consciousness, the heavenly gift that is happiness for humanity alone (not all humans, but only the few who have the mind to contain so great a bounty – as the sun lights up the world, so the human mind shines with the light of consciousness, but it is greater, for whatever the sun illuminates is sometimes deprived of its light by the interposition of earth and moon and the intervening night), consciousness, once coupled with the human soul, becomes one material in the closely joined coupling, so that minds of this sort are never obstructed by the errors

of darkness. They are right who have said that the soul of the gods is consciousness, though I say it is the soul not of all gods but only of the great and original gods."

[19] "Which gods do you call the sources of things or the first beginnings, Trismegistus?"

"Longing for heaven's favor, I begin by disclosing great things to you and exposing divine mysteries."

"There are many kinds of gods, of whom one part is intelligible, the other sensible. Gods are not said to be intelligible because they are considered beyond the reach of our faculties; in fact, we are more conscious of these intelligible gods than of those we call visible, as you will be able to see from our discussion if you pay attention. For my discourse is indeed a lofty one, all the more divine for remaining beyond human thought and effort, and, unless your ears take in the words I speak and do heedful service, my discourse will fly past you and flow by you or rather flow back within itself, mixing with the streaming of its source."

"The heads of all classes are gods, after whom come gods who have a head-⟨of⟩-*ousia;* these are the sensible gods, true to both their origins, who produce everything throughout sensible nature, one thing through another, each god illuminating his own work. The *ousiarchōs* of heaven (whatever one means by that word) is Jupiter, for Jupiter supplies life through heaven to all things. Light is the *ousiarchōs* of the sun, for the blessing of light pours down on us through the orb of the sun. The thirty-six (the term is 'horoscopes'), the stars that are always fixed in the same place, have as their head or *Heimarmenē* the one called *Pantomorphos* or Omniform, who makes various forms within various classes. The so-called seven spheres have the *ousiarchai* or heads called Fortune and *Heimarmenē*, whereby all things change according to nature's law and a steadfast stability that stirs in everlasting variation. Air is the instrument or mechanism of all the gods, that through which all things are made; its *Heimarmenē* is the second…."

"… to mortals the mortal and to them their like. Given such conditions, all things from bottom to top {reach out to one another and link together in mutual connections. But …} mortals are attached to immortals and sensibles to insensibles. And the whole of it complies with that supreme governor, the

master, so that really there are not many, but rather one. In fact, all depend from one and flow from it though they seem separated and are believed to be many. Taken together, however, they are one or rather two, whence all are made and by which they are made – out of the matter, in other words, of which they are made, and from the will of him whose assent makes them different."

[20] "Once more, Trismegistus, what does this explanation say?"

"This, Asclepius: God, father, master of all, whatever name people use to call him something holier or more reverent, a name that should be sacred among us because of the understanding we have (given the greatness of this divinity, none of these titles will name him precisely; if a word is this – the sound of spirit striking the air and declaring a person's whole wish or meaning as his mind happens to grasp it from the senses, a name, its whole content defined and circumscribed, composed of a few syllables, providing the necessary exchange between human voice and ears – then the whole of god's name also includes meaning and spirit and air and everything at once that is in them or through them or from them; no, I cannot hope to name the maker of all majesty, the father and master of everything, with a single name, even a name composed of many names; he is nameless or rather he is all-named since he is one and all, so that one must call all things by his name or call him by the names of everything), god, the only and the all, completely full of the fertility of both sexes and ever pregnant with his own will, always begets whatever he wishes to procreate. His will is all goodness. From his divinity the same goodness that is in all things came to be naturally so that all might be as they are and were, so that to all things to come hereafter they might provide the power to come to be of themselves. This is the explanation given to you, Asclepius, why and how all things are made."

[21] "Do you say that god is of both sexes, Trismegistus?"

"Not only god, Asclepius, but all things ensouled and soulless, for it is impossible for any of the things that are to be infertile. Take away fertility from all the things that now exist, and it will be impossible for them to be forever. I say {that sensation and growth are also in the nature of things, that the world} contains growth within it and preserves all that have come to be. For each sex is full of fecundity, and the linking of the two or, more

accurately, their union is incomprehensible. If you call it Cupid or Venus or both, you will be correct."

"Grasp this in your mind as truer and plainer than anything else: that god, this master of the whole of nature, devised and granted to all things this mystery of procreation unto eternity, in which arose the greatest affection, pleasure, gaiety, desire and love divine. One should explain how great is the force and compulsion of this mystery, were it not that each individual already knows from contemplation and inward consciousness. For if you take note of that final moment to which we come after constant rubbing when each of the two natures pours its issue into the other and one hungrily snatches ⟨love⟩ from the other and buries it deeper, finally at that moment from the common coupling females gain the potency of males and males are exhausted with the lethargy of females. Therefore, the act of this mystery, so sweet and vital, is done in secret so that the divinity that arises in both natures from the sexual coupling should not be forced to feel the shame that would come from the laughter of the ignorant if it happened in public or, much worse, if it were open to the sight of irreverent people."

[22] "The reverent are not many, in any case, no more than a few whose number in the world can be counted, whence it happens that evil remains in the many because they lack wisdom and knowledge of all the things that are. Scorn for the vices of the whole world – and a cure for those vices – comes from understanding the divine plan upon which all things have been based. But when ignorance and folly persist, all vices thrive and wound the soul with incurable disorders. Tainted and corrupted by them, the soul grows inflamed as if poisoned – except the souls of those who have the sovereign remedy of learning and understanding."

"Therefore, since my help is only for the few, it will be worthwhile to follow and finish this treatise, which tells why divinity deigned to impart its understanding and learning to humans alone. Hear me, then."

"God, the father and master, made gods first and then humans, taking equal portions from the more corrupt part of matter and from the divine; thus it happened that the vices of matter remained coupled with bodies, along with other vices caused by the foods and sustenance that we are obliged to share with all living things. Hence it is inevitable that the longings of desire and the other vices of mind sink into human souls. Even though immortality

and unaging vigor were wisdom and learning enough for the gods, who were made of nature's cleanest part and had no need of help from reason and learning, nonetheless, because god's plan was a unity, he established in eternal law an order of necessity framed in law, which stood in place of learning and understanding lest the gods be detached from them, for among all living things god recognized mankind by the unique reason and learning through which humans could banish and spurn the vices of bodies, and he made them reach for immortality as their hope and intention. In short, god made mankind good and capable of immortality through his two natures, divine and mortal, and so god willed the arrangement whereby mankind was ordained to be better than the gods, who were formed only from the immortal nature, and better than all other mortals as well. Consequently, since he is conjoined to them in kinship, mankind honors the gods with reverent and holy mind; the gods also show concern for all things human and watch over them in faithful affection. [23] But one may say this only of the few people endowed with faithful mind. Of the vice-ridden say nothing, lest we profane this most holy discourse by considering them."

"And since this discourse proclaims to us the kinship and association between humans and gods, Asclepius, you must recognize mankind's power and strength. Just as the master and father – or god, to use his most august name – is maker of the heavenly gods, so it is mankind who fashions the temple gods who are content to be near to humans. Not only is mankind glorified; he glorifies as well. He not only advances toward god; he also makes the gods strong. Are you surprised, Asclepius? Surely you do not lack confidence, as the many do."

"I am confused, Trismegistus, but I gladly agree to what you say, and I find mankind most fortunate to have attained such happiness."

"Mankind certainly deserves admiration, as the greatest of all beings. All plainly admit that the race of gods sprang from the cleanest part of nature and that their signs are like heads that stand for the whole being. But the figures of gods that humans form have been formed of both natures – from the divine, which is purer and more divine by far, and from the material of which they are built, whose nature falls short of the human – and they represent not only the heads but all the limbs and the whole body. Always mindful of its nature and origin, humanity persists in imitating divinity, representing its gods in

semblance of its own features, just as the father and master made his gods eternal to resemble him."

[24] "Are you talking about statues, Trismegistus?"

"Statues, Asclepius, yes. See how little trust you have! I mean statues ensouled and conscious, filled with spirit and doing great deeds; statues that foreknow the future and predict it by lots, by prophecy, by dreams and by many other means; statues that make people ill and cure them, bringing them pain and pleasure as each deserves."

"Do you not know, Asclepius, that Egypt is an image of heaven or, to be more precise, that everything governed and moved in heaven came down to Egypt and was transferred there? If truth were told, our land is the temple of the whole world."

"And yet, since it befits the wise to know all things in advance, of this you must not remain ignorant: a time will come when it will appear that the Egyptians paid respect to divinity with faithful mind and painstaking reverence – to no purpose. All their holy worship will be disappointed and perish without effect, for divinity will return from earth to heaven, and Egypt will be abandoned. The land that was the seat of reverence will be widowed by the powers and left destitute of their presence. When foreigners occupy the land and territory, not only will reverence fall into neglect but, even harder, a prohibition under penalty prescribed by law (so-called) will be enacted against reverence, fidelity and divine worship. Then this most holy land, seat of shrines and temples, will be filled completely with tombs and corpses."

"O Egypt, Egypt, of your reverent deeds only stories will survive, and they will be incredible to your children! Only words cut in stone will survive to tell your faithful works, and the Scythian or Indian or some such neighbor barbarian will dwell in Egypt. For divinity goes back to heaven, and all the people will die, deserted, as Egypt will be widowed and deserted by god and human. I call to you, most holy river, and I tell your future: a torrent of blood will fill you to the banks, and you will burst over them; not only will blood pollute your divine waters, it will also make them break out everywhere, and the number of the entombed will be much larger than the

living. Whoever survives will be recognized as Egyptian only by his language; in his actions he will seem a foreigner."

[25] "Asclepius, why do you weep? Egypt herself will be persuaded to deeds much wickeder than these, and she will be steeped in evils far worse. A land once holy, most loving of divinity, by reason of her reverence the only land on earth where the gods settled, she who taught holiness and fidelity will be an example of utter ⟨un⟩belief. In their weariness the people of that time will find the world nothing to wonder at or to worship. This all – a good thing that never had nor has nor will have its better – will be endangered. People will find it oppressive and scorn it. They will not cherish this entire world, a work of god beyond compare, a glorious construction, a bounty composed of images in multiform variety, a mechanism for god's will ungrudgingly supporting his work, making a unity of everything that can be honored, praised and finally loved by those who see it, a multiform accumulation taken as a single thing."

"They will prefer shadows to light, and they will find death more expedient than life. No one will look up to heaven. The reverent will be thought mad, the irreverent wise; the lunatic will be thought brave, and the scoundrel will be taken for a decent person. Soul and all teachings about soul (that soul began as immortal or else expects to attain immortality) as I revealed them to you will be considered not simply laughable but even illusory. But – believe me – whoever dedicates himself to reverence of mind will find himself facing a capital penalty. They will establish new laws, new justice. Nothing holy, nothing reverent nor worthy of heaven or heavenly beings will be heard of or believed in the mind."

"How mournful when the gods withdraw from mankind! Only the baleful angels remain to mingle with humans, seizing the wretches and driving them to every outrageous crime – war, looting, trickery and all that is contrary to the nature of souls. Then neither will the earth stand firm nor the sea be sailable; stars will not cross heaven nor will the course of the stars stand firm in heaven. Every divine voice will grow mute in enforced silence. The fruits of the earth will rot; the soil will no more be fertile; and the very air will droop in gloomy lethargy."

[26] "Such will be the old age of the world: irreverence, disorder, disregard for everything good. When all this comes to pass, Asclepius, then

the master and father, the god whose power is primary, governor of the first god, will look on this conduct and these willful crimes, and in an act of will – which is god's benevolence – he will take his stand against the vices and the perversion in everything, righting wrongs, washing away malice in a flood or consuming it in fire or ending it by spreading pestilential disease everywhere. Then he will restore the world to its beauty of old so that the world itself will again seem deserving of worship and wonder, and with constant benedictions and proclamations of praise the people of that time will honor the god who makes and restores so great a work. And this will be the geniture of the world: a reformation of all good things and a restitution, most holy and most reverent, of nature itself, reordered in the course of time ⟨but through an act of will,⟩ which is and was everlasting and without beginning. For god's will has no beginning; it remains the same, everlasting in its present state. God's nature is deliberation; will is the supreme goodness."

"Deliberation ⟨is will⟩, Trismegistus?"

"Will comes to be from deliberation, Asclepius, and the very act of willing comes from will. God wills nothing in excess since he is completely full of all things and wills what he has. He wills all that is good, and he has all that he wills. All things are good that he considers and wills. Such is god, and the world is his image – ⟨good⟩ from good."

[27] "Good, Trismegistus?"

"Good, Asclepius, as I shall teach you. For just as god dispenses and distributes his bounty – consciousness, soul and life – to all forms and kinds in the world, so the world grants and supplies all that mortals deem good, the succession of seasons, fruits emerging, growing and ripening, and other such things. And thus, seated atop the summit of the highest heaven, god is everywhere and surveys everything all around. For there is a starless place beyond heaven remote from all bodily objects. The one who dispenses ⟨life,⟩ whom we call Jupiter, occupies the place between heaven and earth. But Jupiter Plutonius rules over earth and sea, and it is he who nourishes mortal things that have soul and bear fruit. The powers of these gods invigorate crops, trees and soil, but powers and effects of other gods will be distributed through all things that are. The gods who rule the earth will ⟨withdraw⟩, and

they will be stationed in a city founded at Egypt's farthest border toward the setting sun, where the whole race of mortals will hasten by land and sea."

"But tell me where these gods of yours are now, Trismegistus?"

"Stationed in the great city on the Libyan mountain. And, for the time being, let that be their story."

"We must talk now about the immortal and the mortal, for anticipation and fear of death torture the many who do not know the true account of it. Death results from the disintegration of a body worn out with work, after the time has passed when the body's members fit into a single mechanism with vital functions. The body dies, in fact, when it can no longer support a person's vital processes. This is death, then: the body's disintegration and the extinction of bodily consciousness. Worrying about it is pointless. But there is another problem worth worrying about, though people disregard it out of ignorance or disbelief."

"What is it that they ignore, Trismegistus, or whose possibility they question?"

[28] "Listen then, Asclepius. When soul withdraws from the body, it passes to the jurisdiction of the chief demon who weighs and judges its merit, and if he finds it faithful and upright, he lets it stay in places suitable to it. But if he sees the soul smeared with the stains of wrongdoing and dirtied with vice, he sends it tumbling down from on high to the depths below and consigns it to the storms and whirlpools of air, fire and water in their ceaseless clashing – its endless punishment to be swept back and forth between heaven and earth in the streams of matter. Then the soul's bane is its own eternity, for an undying sentence oppresses it with eternal torment. To escape this snare, let us recognize what we must fear, dread and avoid. After they have done wrong, the unbelievers will be forced to believe, not by words but by example, not threats but real suffering of punishment."

"Is it not human law only that punishes the wrongs that humans do, Trismegistus?"

"In the first place, Asclepius, everything earthly is mortal, as are also those beings that live in a bodily state and fade from life in that same bodily state. They are all subject to penalties for the right or wrong they have done

in life, and the penalties after death are more severe in so far as their wrongdoing may have been hidden during life. The divinity foreknows all of it, so one pays the penalty precisely in proportion to one's wrongdoing."

[29] "Who deserve the greater penalties, Trismegistus?"

"Those condemned by human laws who lose their lives violently so that they seem to have been penalized deservedly and not to have paid their debt to nature with a soul. On the other hand, the upright person's defence lies in reverence for god and supreme fidelity. God protects such people from all evils. For the father and master of all, who alone is all, shows himself freely to all – not *where* as in a place nor *how* as through some quality nor *how much* as in a quantity but by illuminating people with the understanding that comes only through mind. And when the shadows of error have been scattered from a person's soul and he has perceived the light of truth, he couples himself with divine understanding in his whole consciousness, and when his love of it has freed him from the part of nature that makes him mortal, he conceives confidence in immortality to come. This is what will separate the good from the wicked. When he has seen the light of reason as if with his eyes, every good person is enlightened by fidelity, reverence, wisdom, worship and respect for god, and the confidence of his belief puts him as far from humanity as the sun outshines the stars. In fact, the sun illuminates the other stars not so much by the intensity of its light as by its divinity and holiness. The sun is indeed a second god, Asclepius, believe it, governing all things and shedding light on all that are in the world, ensouled and soulless."

"For if the world was and is and will be a living thing that lives forever, nothing in the world is mortal. Since each part of it, as such in its actual state, lives forever and also lives in a world which is itself a single living thing that lives forever, there is no place in it for mortality, so if the world must always live, the world must be completely full of life and eternity. Just as the world is everlasting, then, so the sun is ever the governor of things that have life and of all their power to live, dispensing and continuing it. Hence, god is the everlasting governor of things living in the world and of those that have life, and he dispenses this life eternally. He dispensed it all at once, however: life is supplied by eternal law to all that have it, in the way that I shall describe."

[30] “Eternity’s lifegiving power stirs the world, and the place of the world is in living eternity itself; since everlasting life hedges it about and, in a manner of speaking, holds it together, the world will never stop moving nor be destroyed. The world itself dispenses life to everything in it, and it is the place of all things governed under the sun. The world’s motion is a twofold activity: eternity enlivens the world from without, and the world enlivens all within it, dispersing them all according to numbers and times fixed and appointed by the action of the sun and the movements of the stars, the whole chronological scheme framed in divine law. On earth one tells time by the quality of the air and the change of hot seasons and cold, but in heaven time runs by the return of the coursing stars to the same places in chronological cycles. The world is time’s receptacle; the cycling and stirring of time invigorate it. Yet time works by orderly rule: order and time cause the renewal of everything in the world through alternation. Nothing in this situation is stable, nothing fixed, nothing immobile among things that come to be in heaven and earth: the lone exception is god, and rightly he alone, for he is whole, full and perfect in himself and by himself and about himself. He is his own steadfast stability, and no external impulse can move him from his place since everything is in him and he alone in everything – unless one ventures to say that his motion is *in* eternity. But eternity, toward which all the stirring of time recedes and from which all the stirring of time takes its rise, is itself immobile.”

[31] “Therefore, god has ⟨always⟩ been stable, and eternity likewise has always stood still along with him, holding within it a world that had not come to be, the one we correctly call sensible. This sensible world, which imitates eternity, was made in the image of that god. Though it always stirs, time in its own way still has the power and character of stability by the very necessity of recurring upon itself. Thus, although eternity is stable, immobile and fixed, yet because the stirring of time (which moves) always comes back to eternity and because the movement turns in a temporal pattern, it happens that eternity (which in itself does not move) seems to be stirred through the time in which it is, and it is in time that all the stirring goes on. So it happens that eternity’s stability is moved and that time’s mobility becomes stable by the fixed law of its cycle. Thus may one also believe that god stirs within himself – but in the same immobility, for because of its immensity the stirring of his stability is in fact immobile. The law of immensity itself is immobile. This being, then, which is not of a kind to be accessible to the senses, lies

beyond limitation, comprehension and calculation. It cannot be carried or fetched or hunted down. Where it is, whither it goes, whence it came, how it acts, what it is – uncertain. It carries on in exalted stability, and its stability acts within it: god, eternity, both, one in the other or both in both. Consequently, eternity has no limitation within time. But time, granted that it can be limited by number or alternation or periodic return through recurrence, is eternal. Both are infinite, then; both seem eternal. For stability, firmly fixed to sustain the things that can be stirred, rightly takes first place owing to its steadfastness."

[32] "The beginnings of everything, then, are god and eternity. But because it is mobile the world does not hold first place; mobility exceeds stability in it even though, conforming to the law that keeps it ever stirring, it has a steadfastness free of motion."

"The total consciousness that resembles divinity, immobile in itself, moves itself in its own stability. It is holy, uncorrupted, everlasting and whatever one can say better of it – if anything can be better than the eternity of the supreme god that rests in truth itself – completely full of all sensible forms and of the whole ordering, resting, so to speak, with god. The world's consciousness is the receptacle of all sensible forms and orderings. But to be mindful of all that it has done, human ⟨consciousness depends on⟩ memory's tenacity. In its descent, the divinity of consciousness reaches down only as far as the human animal, for the supreme god did not want the divine consciousness to mingle with every living thing. He did not want it to be ashamed from coupling with the other living things. The understanding of human consciousness, what it is and how great it is, comes entirely from memory of past events. (Because of his tenacity of memory, he was even made governor of earth.) The understanding of nature, however, and the quality of the world's consciousness can be fully perceived from all the things in the world that sense can detect. Eternity's understanding, which comes next, is a consciousness gained from the sensible world, from which its quality can be discerned. But the quality of consciousness in the supreme god and the understanding of that quality is truth alone. Not a shadow, not even the faintest trace of this truth can be discerned in the world, for there is falsehood wherever one discerns anything by measuring time, and where there is geniture one finds error."

"So you see the depth of the subjects we deal with, Asclepius, and what we venture to achieve. But to you, supreme god, I give thanks for enlightening me with the light by which divinity can be seen. And you, Tat and Asclepius and Hammon, hide these divine mysteries among the secrets of your heart and shield them with silence."

"Understanding differs from consciousness in this, however: that our understanding comes to understand and discern the quality of the consciousness of the world by concentrating the mind, while the world's understanding comes to know eternity and the gods who are above the world. And thus it comes about that we humans see the things that are in heaven as if through a mist, to the extent that we can, given the condition of human consciousness. When it comes to seeing great things, our concentration is quite confined, but once it has seen, the happiness of our awareness is vast."

[33] "On the void that so many consider an important topic now, I hold the following: there is no such thing as a void, nor can there have been, nor will there ever be. For all the members of the world are completely full so that the world itself is complete and filled with bodies diverse in quality and form, each having its own shape and size. Some are larger than others, some smaller, and they differ in density and rarity. The denser, like the larger, are easier to see, but the smaller and rarer are very difficult or altogether impossible to see, and we can detect them only by touch. Hence, many believe that these are not bodies and that they are empty places – which is impossible. For just as that which is said to be 'beyond the world' (if there is any such thing, I do not believe that ⟨it is void⟩) is full of intelligible things resembling it in divinity, as I take it, so also is this world that we call 'sensible' completely full of bodies and living things that conform to its nature and quality. We do not see them all in their true aspects, but some as far too large, others as much too tiny; they look like this to us either because they are far away from us or because our eyes have gone bad. Or else, because they are so very tiny, many believe that they do not exist at all. (I am speaking now of the demons who always stay near us, so I believe, and the heroes who dwell between the purest part of the air above us and the place where there are no fogs or clouds or disturbance from the stirring of the signs.) Consequently, Asclepius, you are to call nothing 'void' unless you mean to say that what you call 'void' is 'void-of' something – void of fire or void of water and so on. Thus, though one may see something that can be

void of such things as these, in no event can it be empty of spirit and air, no matter how small or large the thing that seems void."

[34] "One must say the same about place, which lacks meaning as a term in isolation. For the evidence of place is from that whose place it is; indeed, take away this most important feature, and you truncate the sense of the word. This is why we may speak correctly of the place of water, the place of fire, and so on. Just as it is impossible for anything to be void, so the meaning of place in isolation is indiscernible. If you assume a place apart from that of which it is the place, it would seem to be an empty place, which, I believe, cannot exist in the world. If nothing is void, it is also evident that nothing is place as such, except as you add visible marks to it – length, breadth, height – as you would to human bodies."

"Asclepius and the rest of you here: given these conditions, know that the intelligible world, discernible only through mind's intuition, is incorporeal and that nothing corporeal can be combined with its nature, nothing discernible by quality, quantity and number, for there is no such thing in it."

"The world called 'sensible' is the receptacle of all the sensible forms or qualities of bodies, none of which can be invigorated without god. For god is everything; everything comes from him; everything depends on his will. And the whole of it is good, fair, wise, inimitable, to god alone sensible and intelligible. Without god there was nothing, nor is, nor will be, for all things are from him, in him and through him: qualities multiform and various, great quantities, all immeasurable magnitudes and omniform forms. If you come to understand them, Asclepius, you will thank god. And if you consider the whole, you will learn that the sensible world itself and all it contains are in truth covered over by that higher world as if by a garment."

[35] "Each kind of living thing, Asclepius, no matter whether mortal or immortal, rational ⟨or irrational⟩, whether ensouled or soulless, every one has the appearance of its kind in keeping with its relation to the kind. And although each kind of living thing possesses the whole form of its kind, within that same form each of them differs from the other: for example, although man-kind is one in form, so that a human can be distinguished on sight, each person within the same form differs from the others. For the class is divine and incorporeal, as is anything apprehended by the mind. Therefore, since these two components that make up forms are bodies ⟨and⟩ the non-

bodily, it is impossible for any form to come to be in close similarity with another at distant points of time and latitude. The forms change as often as the hour has moments in the turning circle where the god resides whom we have called Omniform. The class persists, begetting copies of itself as often, as many and as diverse as the rotation of the world has moments. As it rotates the world changes, but the class neither changes nor rotates. Thus, the forms of each kind persist, though within the same form there are differences."

[36] "And does the world change its form, Trismegistus?"

"You see, Asclepius: it is as if I had been telling you all this in your sleep. What is the world, really? Of what does it consist if not of all the things that have come to be? What you mean to ask about, then, is heaven, earth and the elements. What else changes its form more continually? Heaven becomes wet or dry, cold or hot, clear or foul; these forms keep changing into one another under the one form of heaven. Earth is always undergoing many transformations in form as it begets its fruits, as it promotes the growth of what it has begotten, and as it produces the various qualities and different quantities of all its fruits, their stages or courses of growth, and especially the qualities, odors, tastes and forms of trees, flowers and shrubs. Fire causes many alterations that are divine. Indeed, the appearances of sun and moon are omniform, rather like our mirrors that reproduce likenesses through reflections comparable in brilliance. [37] But now enough has been said of such things."

"Let us turn again to mankind and reason, that divine gift whereby a human is called a rational animal. What we have said of mankind is wondrous, but less wondrous than this: it exceeds the wonderment of all wonders that humans have been able to discover the divine nature and how to make it. Our ancestors once erred gravely on the theory of divinity; they were unbelieving and inattentive to worship and reverence for god. But then they discovered the art of making gods. To their discovery they added a conformable power arising from the nature of matter. Because they could not make souls, they mixed this power in and called up the souls of demons or angels and implanted them in likenesses through holy and divine mysteries, whence the idols could have the power to do good and evil."

"Take your ancestor, for example: he was the first to discover medicine, Asclepius. They dedicated a temple to him on the Libyan mountain near the

shore of the crocodiles. There lies his material person – his body, in other words. The rest, or rather, the whole of him (if the whole person consists in consciousness of life) went back happier to heaven. Even now he still provides help to sick people by his divine power, as he used to offer it through the art of medicine. And Hermes, whose family name I bear, does he not dwell in his native city that was named for him, where mortals come from all around for his aid and protection? Isis, wife of Osiris: we know how much good she can do when well disposed, when angered how much harm! Anger comes easily to earthly and material gods because humans have made and assembled them from both natures. Whence it happens that these are called holy animals by the Egyptians, who throughout their cities worship the souls of those deified while alive, in order that cities might go on living by their laws and calling themselves by their names. For this reason, Asclepius, because what one group worships and honors another group treats differently, Egypt's cities constantly assail one another in war."

[38] "And the quality of these gods who are considered earthly – what sort of thing is it, Trismegistus?"

"It comes from a mixture of plants, stones and spices, Asclepius, that have in them a natural power of divinity. And this is why those gods are entertained with constant sacrifices, with hymns, praises and sweet sounds in tune with heaven's harmony: so that the heavenly ingredient enticed into the idol by constant communication with heaven may gladly endure its long stay among humankind. Thus does man fashion his gods."

"Do not suppose that these earthly gods act aimlessly, Asclepius. Heavenly gods inhabit heaven's heights, each one heading up the order assigned to him and watching over it. But here below our gods render aid to humans as if through loving kinship, looking after some things individually, foretelling some things through lots and divination, and planning ahead to give help by other means, each in his own way."

[39] "Then what part of the plan belongs to *Heimarmenē* or the Fates, Trismegistus? The heavenly gods rule universais, but singulars belong to the earthly gods – correct?"

"What we call *Heimarmenē*, Asclepius, is the necessity in all events, which are always bound to one another by links that form a chain. She is the

maker of everything, then, or else the supreme god, or the second god made by the supreme god, or the ordering of all things in heaven and earth made steadfast by divine laws. Therefore, this *Heimarmenē* and Necessity are bound to one another by an unbreakable glue, and, of the two, *Heimarmenē* comes first, begetting the sources of all things, but the things that depend on her beginning them are forced into activity by Necessity. What follows them both is Order, the structure and temporal arrangement of the things that must be brought about. For without the fitting together of an order, there is nothing, and in everything the world's order is complete. Order is the vehicle of the world itself, and the whole consists of order."

[40] "These three, then – *Heimarmenē*, Necessity and Order – are in the very fullest sense the products of god's assent, who governs the world by his own law and divine plan, and god has barred them altogether from every act of willing or willing-not. Not disturbed by anger nor swayed by kindness, they subject themselves to the necessity of the eternal plan. And the plan is eternity itself: irresistible, immovable, indestructible. First comes *Heimarmenē*, then, who provides progeny enough for all to come with the seed she has sown, as it were, and Necessity follows, forcing them all into activity by compulsion. Order comes third to preserve the structure of the things that *Heimarmenē* and Necessity arrange. This is eternity, then, which can neither begin to be nor cease being, which turns round and round in everlasting motion under the fixed and unchanging law of its cycle, its parts rising and falling time and again so that as time changes the same parts that had fallen rise anew. Circularity gives the turning a pattern that crowds everything together so that you cannot know where the turning starts (assuming that it starts) since everything always seems to follow and also to precede itself. But accident and chance are also mixed into everything material in the world."

"I have told you everything that a human being could say, with god's willingness and permission. Blessing god and praying, it remains for us only to return to the care of the body. We have dealt enough with theology, and we souls have eaten our fill, so to speak."

[41] As they left the sanctuary, they began praying to god and turning to the south (for when someone wants to entreat god at sunset, he should direct his gaze to that quarter, and likewise at sunrise toward the direction they call east), and they were already saying their prayer when in a hushed voice

Asclepius asked: "Tat, do you think we should suggest that your father tell them to add frankincense and spices as we pray to god?"

When Trismegistus heard him, he was disturbed and said: "A bad omen, Asclepius, very bad. To burn incense and such stuff when you entreat god smacks of sacrilege. For he wants nothing who is himself all things or in whom all things are. Rather let us worship him by giving thanks, for god finds mortal gratitude to be the best incense."

"We thank you, supreme and most high god, by whose grace alone we have attained the light of your knowledge; holy name that must be honored, the one name by which our ancestral faith blesses god alone, we thank you who deign to grant to all a father's fidelity, reverence and love, along with any power that is sweeter, by giving us the gift of consciousness, reason and understanding:

consciousness, by which we may know you;
reason, by which we may seek you in our dim suppositions;
knowledge, by which we may rejoice in knowing you.

And we who are saved by your power do indeed rejoice because you have shown yourself to us wholly. We rejoice that you have deigned to make us gods for eternity even while we depend on the body. For this is mankind's only means of giving thanks: knowledge of your majesty.

We have known you, the vast light perceived only by reason.
We have understood you, true life of life, the womb pregnant with all coming-to-be.
We have known you, who persist eternally by conceiving all comingto-be in its perfect fullness.

Worshipping with this entire prayer the good of your goodness, we ask only this, that you wish us to persist in the love of your knowledge and that we never be cut off from such a life as this."

"With such hopes we turn to a pure meal that includes no living thing."

NOTES

I
⟨Discourse⟩ of Hermes Trismegistus: Poimandres

Title The word "discourse" (*logos*) is not in the Greek. The Greek name "Hermes" corresponds to the Egyptian "Thoth," a god known through the whole history of Egyptian religion but remarkably popular in the Ptolemaic period, from which era – around 168–163 BCE – come the first known records in the Egyptian language of an epithet of the type "three times greatest" applied to Thoth. A title of this kind occurs on a demotic ostracon from an "archive" that also contains a few sherds preserving Greek versions of the same phrase in the form *megistou kai megistou theou megalou*, two superlative forms of "great" followed by a positive, a construction perhaps meant to reflect the pattern of the Egyptian expression. An Egyptian translation of the Greek *trismegistos* ("thrice greatest") has been identified from around ZOO CE, but the single Greek word itself occurs only in the second century CE and after; cf. LSJ s.v. *trismegistos*, where the citation from the third century BCE depends on a heavily reconstructed text. In hieroglyphics the usual representations for "Thoth," pronounced approximately *Te-how-ti*, were either an ibis on a perch or an ibisheaded man. Greek transliterations varied: *theuth*, *thõth*, *thouth*, etc. "Tat" is a variant of "Thoth" in the *Hermetica*. The god's most prominent manifestations were the ibis and the ape – actually the baboon or *kunokephalos*. He was also a moon god and as such a reflection or representative of Re, the sun. Egyptians traced the origin of law and social order to Thoth, as well as ritual and its sacred language. He was also associated with medicine, magic, messages, death and the afterlife. See: Plato, *Phaedrus* 274C–5B; *Philebus* 18B; *Cratylus* 407E–8B; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.22.56; Martial 5.24.15; Diodorus Siculus 1.15.9–16.2; Servius on *Aeneid* 4.577; Waddell, *Manetho* pp. 209–11;

Athenagoras, *Petition* 28.6; Arnobius, *Against the Pagans* 4.13–17; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.10.48; *NHC* II.1.5.5–10; X.1.6.19, 7.17, 23; *PGM* IV.885–6, 1000- 5, V.213–60, 370–446, VII.545–59, 919–24, VIII.1–63, XIII.10–16, 135–40, XXIVa.1–10 (Betz, pp. 55, 58, 104–9, 133, 142, 145–6, 172, 175, 264); Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 27, 100, 117–22; and *HMR*, p. 28; Scott IV, 3; FR I, 67–74, 283–96; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 216–17; Emery (1965), pp. 3–8; Skeat and Turner (1968), pp. 199–208; Parlebas (1974), pp. 25–8; Derchain and Derchain (1975), pp. 7–10; Rees, *Hermopolis*, pp. 5–7; Ray, *Archive*, pp. 73–80; W. Kroll, PW VIII/1, 792–3; Rusch, PW VIA/1, 351–88; Boylan, *Thoth*, pp. 1–5, 62–76, 81, 89, 92, 95, 124, 137, 165; Pietschmann, *Hermes*, pp. 28–37; Schott (1972), pp. 20–5; Tröger (1973), p. 103; Grese (1988), pp. 50–1; W. Gundel, *Dekane*, pp. 19–21, 53, 56–8; H. Gundel, *Weltbild*, pp. 25–33, 50–2, 76; Versnel (1974), pp. 144–51; Bleeker, *Hathor*, pp. 1–4, 18–21, 106–60; Reymond, *Hermetic*, pp. 20, 36–41; cf. Derchain-Urtel, *Thot*, p. 143.

Although the text of *C.H.* I makes no mention of Hermes, and although the narrator is a human (sections 22, 26–32), the common presumption – fortified by the title and by *C.H.* XIII. 15, 19 – is that Hermes is the speaker: Zielinski (1905), pp. 323–4; cf. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 11–13, 214; Scott II, 12; Haenchen (1965), pp. 149–50. Throughout these treatises, Hermes stands in various relations of genealogy and tradition to other figures named in them and described below (*C.H.* II.1, IV.3, X.23; the title notes on XI, XIII, XVI; and *Asclep.* 1): Asclepius, Tat, Agathodaimon, Nous and Ammon are prominent as interlocutors or authorities in the seventeen Greek *Hermetica* and the *Asclepius*; Isis and others appear in the fragments preserved by Stobaeus; FR II, 5–6. For example, near the beginning of the *Korē Kosmou* (*S.H.* XXIII.5–6; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 190–1), Isis tells Horus that "Hermes, who knew all … inscribed what he understood and, having inscribed, concealed it, so that every generation to come later in the world would seek for it. When he rose up to the stars to attend his kindred gods, his successor was Tat, his son and heir in these teachings, and not long afterward came Asclepius Imouthes, according to the wishes of Ptah Hephaistos."

Herodotus (2.51, Sélincourt trans.) claimed that many religious usages "were borrowed by the Greeks from the Egyptians. This is not the case, however, with the Greek custom of making images of Hermes with the

phallus erect.… they learned the practice from the Pelasgians." But Hippolytus (*Refutation of All Heresies* 5.7.27–39; below, section 4, on "coiling"), reporting a Gnostic interpretation of Hermes of Cyllene – the guide of dead souls who opens the last book of the *Odyssey* – says that "the Greeks took this mystery from the Egyptians." The commentary reported by Hippolytus (a product of the Naasene Gnostics, on whom see below, section 4) then goes on to associate Hermes as ithyphallic psychopomp with the Logos, the Demiurge and the Primal Man (below, sections 9, 12; Cumont, *Lux*, pp. 297–301). Bousset (*Kyrios*, pp. 391–9) examines the functions of Hermes as herald, messenger, interpreter and divine creative word as evidence for his view that "behind the figure of the Philonic Logos there stands, in all probability, the god Hermes"; cf. FR I, 71–3.

The name "Poimandres" occurs twelve times in *C.H.* I but only twice elsewhere in the *Hermetica*, in *C.H.* XIII. 15. However, XIII. 19 may imply a derivation from *poimain*ō ("to be a shepherd"), adding *poimēn* ("shepherd") to *anēr* ("man") to produce *Poimandrēs*. This derivation finds support from those who see links between *C.H.* I and the *Shepherd* of Hermas, a Christian apocalypse of the mid-second century which contains a vision resembling in some details the opening of *C.H.* I: Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 7, 11–13, 31–6; *Studien*, pp. 9–10, 15; Bardy (1911), pp. 391–407; Joly, *Pasteur*, pp. 48–53. Recently, Pearson (1981), pp. 340–1, maintained that "*poimēn andrōn* is still the best etymology," citing Philo, *On Agriculture* 51; Ps. 22:1; *NHC* III.2.66.1–2, VI.3.33.2. Since early in the century, however, others have sought a Coptic origin for the name. Scott II, 15–16, on the advice of F.L. Griffith, proposed *p-eime-n-re*, "the knowledge of Re," which accords with section 2, below, if *nous* ("mind") is taken as equivalent to *éime* ("knowledge") and Re, the sun god, is *authentia* ("sovereignty"). Along the same lines, Marcus (1949), pp. 40–3, suggested *peimentero* an abbreviated form meaning "the reason of sovereignty." See also below, sections 2, 4; *C.H.* IV.4, 7; XI.Title; Plutarch, *Greek Questions* 37 (299C–E); Pausanias 9.20.1; Hermas, *Shepherd* 25.1–5; Zielinski (1905), p. 323; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 99; Haenchen (1965), pp. 152–4.

Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 201–9, devotes a chapter to dating *C.H.* I. Reviewing the arguments of Scott and Reitzenstein, he finds that "the *Poimandres* has the aspect … of an experiment in which Valentinus traveled to a further

stage. Now Valentinus … [also] lived in Egypt. Their systems are products of a similar environment…. The accepted date for Valentinus is about AD 130–40. The *Poimandres* is rather more likely to fall before than after this date, and there is no evidence which would conflict with a date early in the second century or even late in the first century."

I.1 ***thought … things that are****: Ennoias moi pote genomenēs peri tōn ontōny* the opening words of the discourse, would also support a stronger translation, such as "when my thoughts were centered (*genomenēs*) on true reality (*tōn ontōn)"* but I have preferred "things that are" as less assertive metaphysically. *Ennoias*, the first word of this phrase, points immediately to the problem of translating the Hermetic vocabulary of perception, cognition and intuition; especially problematic is the large family of words cognate with the noun *nous* or "mind": e.g., *noeō*, *noēma*, *noēsis*, *noētos, ennoia*, *dianoia*, *pronoia*, etc.; and with the noun *gnōsis* or "knowledge": e.g., *gignōskō*, *gnōrizō*, *prognōsis*, *diagnōsis*, etc. The first section of the first discourse, for example, contains four of these words: "thought" (*ennoias*), "thinking" (*dianoias*), "know" (*gnōnai*) and "understanding" (*noēsas*). To the materialist Stoics, who influenced Middle Platonists such as Antiochus of Ascalon, *ennoia* meant a concept derived from sensation, but to other contemporaries of the Hermetic writers, the Valentinian Gnostics, *Ennoia* was an hypostasis, one member of the first pair (*suzugia*) of thirty Aeons. The *Hermetica* treat *ennoia* as an abstraction, though not in the sense of Stoicism. On this word, see the long article by J. Behm in *TDNT* IV, esp. 968–71. Of the word "mind" in the *Hermetica*, Behm (p. 957) says that "the philosophical concept *nous* is brought into close connection with mystical religious ideas, though with an ambiguity of content that defies analysis." For related problems, see below, notes on *C.H.* 1.8; IV.3; VI.1; X.9–10, 15, 21; XI.2; XII. 6; XIII.9, 12; *Asclep*. 3, 32; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 158–9, n. 4; *HMR*, pp. 64–6, 87, 364–400; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 350–4, 372- 5; Bousset (1912), pp. 44–96; Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 87–124; J.-E. Ménard (1975), pp. 110–12; Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, p. 24; Daumas (1982), pp. 15–17; Long, *Hellenistic*, pp. 123–31; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, pp. 65–9.

restrained: For *kataschetheisōn* NF I, 7, n. 1, has "mis en ligature"; for magical connotations of this verb, see LSJ s.v. *katechō*, I.Id, 11.10, and below, *C.H.* IV. 11; "suspended" is also possible.

***an enormous being*:** Haenchen (1965), p. 152, refers to the similar experience recounted in *II Enoch* 1.3–6.

I.2 W*ho … Poimandres*: In Hermas, *Shepherd* 25.3, when the speaker asks "Who are you?" the glorious angel of his vision, dressed like a shepherd (*schēmati poimenikō*), answers, "I am the shepherd (*ho poimēn*), to whom you have been entrusted"; see above, Title.

mind of sovereignty: Fowden (*EH*, p. 105) gives "Highest Power" for *authentias*, and he explains Poimandres' identification with mind by reference to *C.H.* X.21–4, where the initiate prays for "a good mind" which can help free the soul from fleshly darkness and lead it to the light of *gnōsis*; thus, the *Hermetica* "make the spiritual teacher into … a personification of divine intellect." See: NF I, 9, n. 5, for Gnostic uses of *authentia*; Scott II, 17, for the meaning "sovereignty"; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 8, for "*das Himmelsreich*"; and *Studien*, p. 15, for the Iranian Ahura Mazda as *nous*; and Mahé, *Hermès* I, 13- 14, for *Authentikos Logos* as the title of a treatise (*NHC* VI.3) preserved with Hermetic documents in the Nag Hammadi codices.

I.3 *I wish … to know*: Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 308–9, interprets this prayer for *gnōsis* as a wish for "the knowledge of the world in the vision of God." For "the things that are" (*ta onta*) as "true reality," see above, section 1, note on "thought."

I.4 *Saying … appearance*: The Greek is *touto eipōn ēllagē tē idea* ; in the vision of the *Shepherd* 25.4, the angel "changed his appearance (*ēlloiōthē hē idea autou*) while he was speaking"; above, Title, section 2.

I saw … vision : For other examples of ecstasy and vision, see: FR I, 311–16; Jonas, *Gnosis* II, pp. 49–53; Tröger, *Gnosis*, pp. 60–2.

***became light … darkness*:** For the fullness of primordial light, Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 23, 36, refers to *PGM* XIII.570–80 (Betz, pp. 186–7) and *C.H.* XI.6–7; cf. VI.4 on "plenitude." The first part of *PGM* XIII, through line 343 (Betz, pp. 172–82), is called the "Monas" or "Eighth Book of Moses"; lines 15–16 mention a book of Hermes called "Wing," and line 138 may refer to a "Hermetic spell"; other versions of parts of the same material follow in lines 343–646 and 646–734. After lines 161, 471 and 697, all three versions mention an "account of

creation," which FR I, 296, 300–3, calls the *Kosmopoiïa* of Leiden. Its relevance to the cosmogony of *C.H.* I is striking: "When the god laughed, 7 gods were born (who encompass the cosmos …). When he laughed first, Phōs–Augê [Light-Radiance] appeared and irradiated everything and became god over the cosmos and fire…. Then he laughed a second time. All was water. Earth, hearing the sound, cried out and heaved, and the water came to be divided into three parts. A god appeared; he was given charge of the abyss [of primal waters], for without him moisture neither increases nor diminishes. And his name is ESCHAKLEO…. When he wanted to laugh the third time, Nous or Phrenes [Mind or Wits] appeared holding a heart, because of the sharpness of the god. He was called Hermes; he was called SEMESILAM. The god laughed the fourth time, and Genna [Generative Power] appeared, controlling Spora [Procreation]…. He laughed the fifth time and was gloomy as he laughed, and Moira [Fate] appeared…. But Hermes contested with her…. And she was the first to receive the scepter of the world…. He laughed the sixth time and was much gladdened, and Kairos [Time] appeared holding a scepter, indicating kingship, and he gave over the scepter to the first-created god, [Phōs]…. When the god laughed a seventh time Psyche [Soul] came into being, and he wept while laughing. On seeing Psyche, he hissed, and the earth heaved and gave birth to the Pythian serpent who foreknew all things…."; lines 161–205 (Betz, pp. 176–8). Sauneron (1961), pp. 43–8, *Esna*, pp. 266–9, compares late Egyptian texts on the birth of Thoth and on the "seven sayings of Methyer" to this cosmogony. See also West, *Orphic Poems*, pp. 255–6.

The word "clear" (*eudion*) is an emendation of *hēdion* ("pleasant"). This theme of opposition between light and darkness has been taken as evidence for Iranian influence in the *Hermetica*; for example, Klein (*Lichtterminologie*, pp. 85–107; cf. Nock [1929b], pp. 196–7) interprets sections 4–5 as a mythological prologue, based on Manichaean and Mandaean dualism, to sections 6–15; Klein sees the "negative" instances of darkness, water and smoke in section 4, along with the "positive" terms – light, fire, air, spirit – as corresponding to "Iranian- Gnostic" structures. See below, section 25; Reitzenstein, *Studien* p. 15; Bousset, *Hauptprobleme* pp. 113–14, 181–2; and (1914), pp. 117- 23; Scott II, 20–1; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 11–16, 81–2; Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 115–16, 127–30, 201–3.

***arose … descended*:** The word "descended" represents *katōpheres ēn* literally, "was weighty" or "downward-weighing" or "heavy," as below, in sections 10–11, where *katōpherēs* more clearly represents the Stoic view of earth and water as heavy or weighty elements, fire and air as light or weightless elements (*anōpherēs*) cf. *S.H.* XXVI.30; Scott (II, 6–7, 20–3, 122–6) maintains that the treatment of the elements here is fundamentally Stoic; see also Hahm, *Cosmology* pp. 113–15; Sambursky, *Physicsy* pp. 6–7. For "arose separately" (*en merei gegenēmenon*) NF I, 7, 12, n. 8, has "survenue à son tour," but cf. Scott I, 114; IVF, 353; and FR IV, 41–2, where Festugière suggests "formée à part."

***coiling … ⟨snake⟩*:** An alternative translation is "darkness formed apart – fearful and gloomy – coiling sinuously, so it seemed to me"; FR IV, 41, n. 1. Nock's emendation, following Reitzenstein, of *pepeiramenon is espeiramenon* ("coiling"; cf. Lewy, *Oracles* p. 297), and the snake (*ophei*; Reitzenstein suggested *drakonti*) is Nock's addition to the text based on Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.9.13, which contains what scholars take to be a reliable account of a text produced by the Naasene Gnostics. Writing in the third or fourth decade of the third century, Hippolytus reports (5.6.3–4) that the Naasenes "are named in this way from the Hebrew tongue, for *naas* means snake (*ophis*), but afterward they called themselves knowers (*gnōstikoi*), claiming that only they knew 'the deep things.'" Later, just before the passage cited by Nock, Hippolytus explains that "these people respect nothing but the snake, since they are called Naasenes…. Like Thales of Miletus, they say that the snake is the watery substance [see below], and that without it nothing that is – immortal or mortal, ensouled or soulless – can endure at all." The Naasenes, known only from this report of Hippolytus, were an important source for Reitzenstein's interpretation of *C.H.* I (*Poimandres*, pp. 82–102; *Studien*, pp. 104–12, 161–73) because many of the themes (Primal Man, androgynous divinity, soul voyage, etc.) in the "Naasene sermon" and its context are important in this treatise; Reitzenstein also (*Poimandres*, pp. 29–31) reproduces passages from the Greek Magical Papyri (*PGM* IV. 1605–45, 2373–85 [Betz, pp. 68, 81–2]) in which the snake appears prominently, sometimes in connection with Agathodaimon, on whom see below, *C.H.* X.23; cf. Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 11–17. Reymond, *Hermetic*, p. 122, discusses an orthographic connection between the hieroglyphic sign for snake and the idea of primeval waters. West, *Orphic Poems*, pp. 189–90, 224, describes

Chronos as a creative serpent emerging from watery chaos. For other renderings of this passage, see Scott I, 116; IVF, 353; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 114; FR IV, 41–2. See also: above, this section, note on "light"; below, section 5, note on "upon them"; NF I, 12, n. 9; Bousset, *Hauptprobleme* p. 113; and (1914), pp. 166–72; Bräuninger, *Hermes*, pp. 5–29; Doresse, *Books*, pp. 51–2; Foerster, *Gnosis*, pp. 261–3; Frickel, *Naasenerschrift*, pp. 1–6; Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 29–30.

wailing … fire: Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 103–7, writes that "the noise of the waves plays an essential part in the vision of Poimandres, where the Holy Word from the Light seems to be an answer to the ineffable, inarticulate, glamorous cry of Chaos, … [which] is well within the limits of Jewish tradition in laying stress upon the confusion and noise of the primeval ocean. The LXX itself supplies the leading terms … *tetaragmenē* ['agitated,' Ps. 64:8, 76:17–18; Jer. 5:22], *boē* ['cry,' Is. 5:30], *ēchos* ['roar,' Ps. 64:8, 76:17–18; Jer. 5:22]." The manuscripts have "voice of light" (*phōtos*), but NF I, 8, reads "fire" (*puros*) following Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 36–7; see Festugière's objection on pp. 14–15, n. 11, and FR IV, 41, where he also suggests emending *ex autēs* ("from it"; i.e., the "watery nature" above) to *exautēs* ("at once"), giving "then an inarticulate cry like the voice of light came forth at once," i.e., came forth from light rather than water. Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, p. 394, compares the Second God of Numenius to the "workman of the fiery world" (*ho kosmou technitēs puriou*) in the *Chaldaean Oracles* (fragments 5 and 33, Des Places) which emits a fiery word.

I.5 ***light … ⟨watery⟩*:** This passage contains the first of twenty occurrences of the versatile term *logos* in *C.H.* I, here rendered as "holy word" (*logos hagios*). Although this translation may make a Christian resonance inevitable for modern readers, in the original Hermetic context a divine being called Logos ("word," "speech," "reason," "thought," "reason-principle" and so on) would have been recognizable to a non-Christian audience. See West, *Orphic Poems*, p. 35, for an Orphic creative word. One manuscript shows a lacuna between "light" and "holy word." (For the use of three dots […] to indicate a lacuna and angled brackets to indicate an insertion, see above, p. lxv, in the Introduction; note that the conventions of the Budé text followed here indicate square brackets not for a lacuna but for editorial suppression of words judged to be interpolations; see

Règles, pp. 9–11.) Dodd (*Bible*, p. 116; *Fourth Gospel*, p. 38) has "assailed" for *epebē* ("mounted") where NF I, 8, 15–16, n. 12, prefers *couvrir* or *saillir* with their sexual implications. The word "watery" is not in the Greek, but see "watery nature" (*hugran ... phusin*) just above; cf. Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.8.15–16, interpreting Isaiah 43:2, 16, 19–20, for "the watery nature of coming-to-be" (*tēn hugran tēs geneseōs ousian*); Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 99; above, section 4, note on "light."

spirit: For *pneumati* ("spirit") Reitzenstein and Scott substitute *puri*("fire"), but Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 121–4, and NF I, p. 8, preserve the reading of the manuscripts. Throughout my translation, the Greek words represented by "spirit" and associated forms are *pneuma* and its cognates. In this sense, "spirit," unlike the common English usage, often refers to a material substance, the Stoic conception of a higher, finer matter that sustains life, movement and thought. Sometimes, however, as in this passage, the *pneuma* seems to aspire to a higher realm than that of earthly matter; cf. Cyril, *Against Julian* 588B (NF IV, 140–1, frg. 33; Scott IVF, 215–16; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 133–6). Elsewhere, a "demiurgic" *pneuma* has the role of sustaining and organizing the cosmos, as in *Asclep*. 16–17 or *NHC* VI.6.57.10–11, 63.20; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 109–10. Gnostic systems commonly distinguish higher spiritual people (*pneumatikoi*) from lower animate (*psuchikoi*) and material (*hulikoi*) persons, a difference analogous to that discussed in *C.H.* IV.3–4. In *HMR*, pp. 68–77, 401–500, Reitzenstein explores Paul's similar usage of *pneumatikos*, *psuchikos* and *sarkinos* in I Cor. 2:1–3:1, Romans 8:9 and other New Testament texts. Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 35–6, explores the Egyptian background. On the topic of *pneuma*, as on many others, the *Hermetica* are inconsistent, as below, *C.H.* II.8; III.1; X.13–14, 16; XII.18. XIII.12. See NF I, 17, n. 13; Bousset, *Kyrios*, pp. 186–7, 258–65; Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 213–23; *TDNT* VI, 352–9; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 345; Sambursky, *Physics*, pp. 4–5, 21–44; Hahm, *Cosmology*, pp. 158–69.

***that ⟨earth⟩ could*:** Following Reitzenstein, NF I, 8, inserts "earth" (*tēn gēn);* for *theōreisthai* ("be distinguished"; Festugière has "percevait") Rose (1947), p. 103, prefers *diōristhai*, yielding "so that no clear boundary exists between earth and water"; above, section 4, note on "light." See also Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 124–5, referring to Gen. 1:9.

***but … upon them*:** "Moved upon" renders *epipheromenon*, as in LXX Gen. 1:2; see below, section 9, the reference to Cyril in the note on

"craftsman"; Scott II, 23; Dodd *Bible*, pp. 116, 124–5; and Braun, *Jean*, pp. 277–81, for other parallels to Genesis; Daniélou *Doctrine* I, pp. 69–85, points out that esoteric interpretations of the biblical account of creation in Genesis were characteristic of Jewish and Egyptian Gnosticism. More specifically, Haenchen (1965), pp. 157–8, refers to the description of the Sethians in Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.19.17–22: "A ray came down from that perfect light on high, which was held fast in the dark, fearful, bitter, polluted water…. But in its wake comes the fearful and raging wind, like a winged snake. From this wind – from the snake, in other words – comes the beginning of coming-to-be…. The perfect word of light from on high, having become like the beast that is the snake, entered into the unclean womb, seductive in its likeness to the beast, in order to loose the bonds enclosing the perfect mind…. And this is why the word of god had to come down into the womb of a virgin"; cf. *Refutation* 6.14.4–6. Scott finds many correspondences between *C.H.* I and the biblical creation story, and Pearson (1981), pp. 339–40, compares the entire structure of C .H . I with *II Enoch* as representative of Jewish apocalyptic. Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 30–1, detects Egyptian parallels. Layton, *GS*, p. 9, translates: "And they were in motion because of the spiritual reason that 'moved' in obedience"; cf. NF I, 8, 18, n. 15.

I.6 ***mind, your god***: A formulaic usage, according to Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 190; see also FR IV, 52.

lightgiving word: For *phōteinos logos*, see Scott IVF, 353; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 37–8, with references to *C.H.* XI. 14, XII. 12; also above, section 4, note on "light"; section 5, note on "upon them." Braun, *Jean*, pp. 291–5, maintains that C .H . I shows signs not only of knowing the same biblical and Greek background as John's Gospel but also of borrowing from John, especially in regard to the creative role of the Logos; cf. C .H . XIII.2; *Asclep.* 14. But Festugière (1944), pp. 261–2, sees no need to assert any connection with John.

Go on … ***the father:*** For *ho de nous patēr theos*, NF I, 9, has "ton Nous est le Dieu Père," but see also Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 117–21, who takes "the sudden personification of the word" as a "surprising" departure from the resemblance of C .H . I to biblical cosmogony up to this point. Dodd interprets "this doctrine of the *logos* as Son of God" as closer to Philo than to Genesis, concluding that "the Hermetist is interpreting the creation

story of Genesis along lines which might well have been followed by a Hellenistic-Jewish writer, though probably without direct dependence upon Philo." For "the word of the lord" (*logos kuriou*), see below, *C.H.* V.2.

I.7 ***boundless … tobe*:** NF I, 9, has "devenue un monde sans limites," connecting *gegenēmenon* ("come to be") with *phōs* ("light"), but Nock (NF I, 19, n. 18) suggests connecting the verb with *kosmon* ("cosmos").
fire … subdued: Bousset (1914), pp. 117–23, 165–6, connects the inferior position of fire here and in section 9, below, with the "oriental dualism" that he finds characteristic of the *Poimandres*.

I.8 ***In your mind:*** NF I, 9, has "dans le Noûs," but see p. 19, n. 20, for Dodd's suggestion of "dans ton intellect." *PGM* XIII.790–5 (Betz, 190–1), asks Agathodaimon (below, C .H . X.23) to "come into my mind (*noun*) and my understanding … and accomplish for me all the desires of my soul"; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 17, 23.
preprinciple: This word translates *proarchon*, for which NF I, 8, 19, n. 21, has "préprincipe," referring to Gnostic conceptions, on which see below, section 20.
counsel: The noun *boulē*, here translated as "counsel," occurs in five other places in the Corpus proper (*C.H.* I.14, 18, 31; XIII.19, 20) and twice in texts preserved by Stobaeus (*S.H.* XXIII.6, XXVI.9). A more natural usage in English would be "will," which I have reserved for *boulēsis* in C .H . VIII.5, IX.6, XII. 15. Various forms of the verb *boulomai* are more frequent – twenty-four occurrences, not counting Stobaeus. Like other entities (*nous, anthrōpos, logos*) in this discourse and elsewhere in the *Hermetica*, God's Counsel (*boule*) may be understood as hypostasized; the ordinary psychological meaning of such language permits us also to understand certain entities as existing both in man as faculties of soul or mind and also on a higher plane as autonomous and divine principles. Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 103, 126–32, finds "no occurrence of the expression *boulē theou* in any document … prior to the *Poimandres*, except the LXX, where … similar expressions … occur about twenty times," and he locates the idea in the general framework of Hellenistic Judaism. Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 329–32, writes that "the Hermetics are, apart from the Chaldaeans, the only non- Jewish or non-

Christian theologians (the Gnostics being included among the Christians) in whose system the hypostasis of the divine will plays a special role." However, cf. FR IV, 42–3, for doubts about a hypostasized *boulē*; also below, sections 18, 31; *C.H.* XIII.20; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 39–46; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 28–30, 136; Bousset (1905), p. 696; *Hauptprobleme*, p. 334; Festugière (1951b), pp. 484–5; Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 31, 40; *TDNT* I, 634; NF I, 19, n. 22; and Mahé, *Hermès* II, 292, who refers to *Asclep*. 8 and cites similar language in Egyptian hymns; cf. Zielinski (1905), pp. 324–5, 330, 336; Scott II, 28–9; Haenchen (1965), pp. 163–5.

I.9 androgyne: J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 51–5, connected the theme of androgyny with pantheism, whose presence in the *Hermetica* he attributed to Stoic and other Greek influences. Zielinski (1905), pp. 322, 330–8, and (1906), pp. 25–7, also traced a Hermetic pantheism to Greek sources, contrasting it to two currents of dualism in the Corpus – one Peripatetic, the other Platonic – and criticizing Reitzenstein's *Poimandres* for its "Egyptomania." At this point, however, Mahé, *Hermès* II, 292 cites an Egyptian parallel, as well as *C.H.* V.7 and *Asclep*. 21; cf. section 15, below and *C.H.* II.17, VI.4, IX.4–5, X.5, XI.22, XII.8; *Asclep*. 20; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, p. 60; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 340–1; West, *Orphic Poems*, p. 35.

***life and light*:** An important pairing in the *Hermetica*, for which Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 133–6, discusses the biblical, Iranian, Egyptian and, especially, the Johannine and Philonic correspondences; Iversen, *Doctrine*, p. 31, suggests a parallel in the Egyptian concepts of Ba and Ankh; above, section 4; below, sections 9,12, 17, 21 and 32; *C.H.* XIII.9, 18–19; *Asclep*. 19, 23, 25; John 1:4, 8:12; II Tim. 1:10; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 10; Bousset, *Kyrios*, pp. 234–5; Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 17–19, 36, 201–5; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 95, 108.

***by speaking gave birth*:** Rose (1947), p. 103, proposes changing *apekuēse* ("gave birth") to *epapekuēse* and inserting the definite article *tō* before *logō* ("speaking"), which would produce "brought forth in addition to the Logos," but see Festugière (1944), p. 257; Reymond, *Hermetic* pp. 143, 145, 154, reproduces a papyrus from the temple of Neith in Dimē of the first century CE which attributes to Thoth or Khnonsu "the Power of Word from divine words"; above, section 4, note on "light."

a craftsman: Etymologically, a *dēmiourgos* (LSJ s.v.) is "one who works for the people," and thus "workman" or "craftsman." Plato used the term in the *Timaeus* (37C, 41A, 42E, 68E, 69C) for the maker of the cosmos, and Cornford (*Plato's Cosmology*, p. 35) says of Plato's conception that it introduces "into philosophy for the first time the image of a creator god." But since the Judaeo-Christian idea of creation came to imply creation *ex nihilo* Guthrie's comment (*HGP* V, 255) is important: "Plato's first lesson … about the Maker … is that, as a *dēmiourgos*, he … must bend to his will a material that is to some extent recalcitrant." In Middle Platonism, "the Dēmiourgos came to be seen as a second god, Intellect (*nous*), the agent or *logos* of the Supreme God," according to Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, pp. 7, 361–72. Bousset (1914), pp. 112–17, who discerns polemic against demiurgic theology in *C.H.* XI.9, 14 and XIV.7–8, finds the closest material in Numenius of Apamea, also named by Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 136–8, in connection with the Demiurge as *deuteros theos*, a second or subordinate god; cf. Puech (1934), pp. 47–52, and *Chaldaean Oracles*, (Des Places, p. 68; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 181–2): "The Father brought everything to completion and handed it over to the second mind, whom you – all humankind – call the first."

Taking the lead from Bousset, FR IV, 54–61, characterizes as "demiurgic" various passages of the *Hermetica* in which god is accessible by way of his good material creation, e.g., *C.H.* IV. 1–2, X.3–4. Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 39–40, lists contradictory passages (*C.H.* I.6, V. 3, VIII.l, IX.8, X.14, XVI.5, 18, *Asclep.* 29) on the Demiurge, Nous and creation, and explains them as results of variations in Egyptian cosmology. In *Against Julian*, a rejoinder to the emperor composed before the middle of the fifth century CE, Cyril of Alexandria frequently cites Hermes on a demiurgic Logos, for example (552D; NF IV, 132, frg. 27; Scott I VF, 202–3): "This is what Hermes Trismegistus says about God: Once having come forth from the Father, all perfect, prolific, and a craftsman in prolific nature, lying low over the prolific water, he made the water conceive"'; above, section 5, note on "upon them"; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 55–7. In Hippolytus' account of the Naasenes (*Refutation* 5.7.30–1), the Demiurge appears as "Esaldaios, a fiery god, fourth in number … craftsman and father of the particular world"; Reitzenstein (*Poimandres*, p. 88; cf. *Studien*, pp. 16, 19) calls the Demiurge "god of air (*Luft*) and fire," but Zielinski (1905), p. 324, objects to "air" as a proper counterpart for

pneuma here. Ferguson (Scott I VF, 354) emphasizes the difference between the Demiurge, as god of the fiery and spiritual places, and Mind, as ruler of the region of life and light. In *PGM* XIII. 161–6, the first of seven deities whom the god creates is Light, who "became god over the cosmos and fire"; above, section 4.

The Septuagint never uses *dēmiourgos* or its cognates to refer to God's creative act; sometimes it uses *ktizein* ("to create") but more often *poiein* ("to make"). The *Hermetica* use *poiein* often but *ktizein* and its relatives rarely (C .H . 1.13, 18; XIII. 17, 20); on Hermes/Thoth as creator, see Hani, *Plutarque*, pp. 240–1, n. 6, which should refer to section 18, below, not 22. Festugière frequently (NF I, 39, 41, n. 27; II, 224) uses *créer* and related terms to render the *poiein* words, no doubt justifiably, but I have reserved "create" for *ktizein* and have used "make" for *poiein*. (See Foerster in *TDNT* III on *ktizō*, esp. 1023–8.) To preserve their connection with *dēmiourgos*, I have used "craftwork," "crafting," etc. to translate such related forms as *dēmiourgeō, dēmiourgēma*, *dēmiourgia and dēmiourgikos*.

***seven governors … fate*:** The five planets and two great luminaries known to the ancients: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Although the astrological material here seems commonplace, Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 138–41, sees a "Stoic background" for this conception of fate and locates its biblical "equivalent" in Gen. 1:16, 18, as extrapolated in *II Enoch* 30.2–7; he also cites Philo, *Confusion of Tongues* 168–73, against the polytheism implicit in the idea of planetary governors (*dioikētai*), even in Wisdom 8:1, where Sophia "spans the world in power from end to end, and gently orders (*dioikei*) all things." For the kinship between the Hermetic governors and the various astrological gatekeepers of late ancient religions, see Dodds, *Anxiety*, pp. 14–16: e.g., the seven "Pole lords of heaven" described in *PGM* IV.674–93 (Betz, p. 51); note the seven gods created in *PGM* XIII. 161–205, above, section 4; see also below, sections 13–16 and 19, on the governors and on human vulnerability to fate (*heimarmenē*), which in his *Poimandres* (pp. 68–81, 102) Reitzenstein identified as a non-Egyptian theme in this treatise, finding its roots in Judaism, Gnosticism and Christianity; cf. *C.H.* X.17, 23; XII.5–9; XVI.11, 16, 18; *Asclep*. 19, 39–40; Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.7.23–4; Bousset (1901), p. 238; Bräuninger, *Hermes*, pp. 29–40;

Haenchen (1965), pp. 166, 175; H. Gundel, *Weltbild*, pp. 70–2; Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologumena*, p. 311.

I.10 ***elements [ ] that weigh:*** The manuscripts repeat "of god" (*tou theou*) after "elements"; for the use of square brackets in the Budé edition to indicate suppression of such interpolations, see above, section 5, note on "light," and p. lxv of the introduction. For *katōpherōn* ("weigh") a more natural English word would be "tend," but see above, section 4, for the more concrete sense of the Greek.

word of god: Above, section 5, note on "light."

same substance: Scott II, 34, points out that "*homoousios* was in use before it was brought into prominence by … the Council of Nicaea."

I.11 ***the word:*** Above, section 5, note on "light."

encompassing … rush: For *dinōn rhoizō* ("whirling … about with a rush") NF I, 10, has "faisant tournoyer en vrombissant." Bousset (1919), p. 208, compares *PGM* IV. 1115–30, especially the phrase "revolution (*dinēsis*) of untiring service by heavenly bodies," and *Chaldaean Oracles* 49 (Des Places, p. 79; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 99, 402–3), where Aion makes the principles (*archai*) "turn (*dinein*) in an unceasing vortex and remain so always."

weighty elements: Above, sections 4 and 10.

⟨earth⟩ brought forth: The word "earth" (*hē gē*) is an editorial addition, as is the first "and" (*kai*) that follows. On the relevance of Gen. 1:20–6 to this passage on the origin of animals, see: Scott II, 35–6; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 143, 225–6; cf. *C.H.* III.3; Haenchen (1965), pp. 169–70.

I.12 ***gave birth to a man:*** Through the remainder of *C.H.* I (14, 16, 17, 21), the word *anthrōpos* is capitalized in Nock's text when it refers to the archetypal Man who is created by the father and then falls into the defective human condition when he feels a sinful attraction for the lower orders of being; for other Hermetic views on Primal Man, see: *C.H.* IV.2; *Asclep.* 7. See also: Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 31–3, 41–4, 241–9, especially for the Jewish and Christian analogues of this idea, and Scott II, 4–5, 36–7. Note that *anthrōpos* refers in Greek to all human beings of either gender, while *anēr*, which occurs only twice in *C.H.* I (sections 27–8) and twice in the other sixteen discourses (*C.H.* II.17, XII.6), denotes

male persons. In passages of *C.H.* I dealing with Primal Man or his descendants, I have used "man" to preserve the resonance with such texts as LXX Dan. 7:13, Matt. 8:20, Mark 9:9–12, John 1:51 and I Cor. 15:45–9. Elsewhere, I have generally used such terms as "person," "people," "human being," "humanity," "mankind," "humankind" and so forth, though perfect consistency in this regard has not been possible; cf. *Asclep.* 1, note on "four men."

In FR III, 3–26, Festugière reads sections 3–26 of the *Poimandres* as recounting soul's origin, incarnation, development and eschatology, based on a pattern found also in treatises on the soul by Tertullian and Iamblichus; Painchaud (1981), pp. 780–3, discovers the same pattern in the *Authentic Teaching* and the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (*NHC* VI.3, VII.2). NF I, 21, n. 34, also refers to the Valentinian myth for the sexual process in the godhead that produces the Man; cf. Layton, *GS*, pp. 281–2; above, section 8. On the relevance of the "Naasene Sermon" preserved by Hippolytus, see above, section 4, especially the references to Reitzenstein, who also (*Poimandres*, pp. 82–114; cf. FR I, 260, 268; Fowden *EH*, pp. 120–6, 150–3) described a lost Hermetic document, a "tablet of Bitys," mentioned by Zosimus and known to Iamblichus, which sets forth an "Egyptian" version of the doctrine of the Primal Man. But Bousset (1905), pp. 697–709, criticized Reitzenstein's Egyptian thesis and claimed that the theme of archetypal Man could only have come from "oriental sources." Then, in *Studien*, pp. 14–23, Reitzenstein emphasized Iranian parallels, and Bousset (*Kyrios*, pp. 188–200) applied Reitzenstein's new interpretation of the "suffering, dying and rising god … Attis, Adonis and Osiris" in the Naasene Sermon not only to *C.H.* I but also to "the Pauline dying-with-Christ and rising-with-Christ," as in Romans 6 or I Cor. 15:45–57. For a contrary view, see Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 146–7; see also: below, sections 15, 25; Bousset, *Hauptprobleme*, pp. 167–94, 331–2; Scott IVF, 355–6; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 344–51; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, p. 96; Bianchi (1967), p. 24.

like himself … image: NF I, 10, translates *ison* as "semblable," but Scott II, 36–7, emends *ison* to *homoion* on the grounds that *isos* implies strict equality, and Dodd, *Bible*, p. 149, has "equal to himself"; cf. LSJ s.v. *isos* I.1; *TDNT* III, 351–2; NF I, 21, n. 35; below, *C.H.* IX. 5; *Asclep.* 8; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 420. Daumas (1982), pp. 13–14, cites Egyptian precedent for

"the … image," on which see also *C.H.* V. 6, VIII.2, XVI.Title; LXX Gen. 1:26–7.

I.13 ***with the father's help***: Although the manuscripts have "father" (*en tō patri*), Nock and Zielinski read "fire" (*en tō puri*), but FR III, 87, prefers "father," as does Haenchen (1965), p. 172: Zielinski (1905), p. 325; NF I, 21, n. 36; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 153.

Entering … sphere: On the Man's journey through the seven spheres, see: below, sections 25–6; Bousset (1901), pp. 136–69, 229–73; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 181–2; Nock (1939), p. 500.

have all authority: "Have" (*hexōn*) requires a slight adjustment of *ex ōn* in the manuscripts. For *exousia* ("authority") here and in paragraphs 14, 15, 28, 32, see below, notes on section 32 and C .H . XVI.14; Mark 1:22; Matt. 7:28–9; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 48–9; *Studien*, pp. 17–19; Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 293.

his brother's: The Man's brother seems to be the Craftsman. section 12 says that the paternal mind gave birth to the Man, and section 9 claims that the divine mind gave birth to the Craftsman "by speaking" (*logō*). If the divine and paternal minds are the same, the Craftsman and the Man are brothers. In section 10, Craftsman and Word join to make the spheres turn and produce elemental nature. Meanwhile, in section 9, the Craftsman produces the governors who admire and assist the Man in section 13.

the governors: Above, section 9.

his own order … their nature: NF I, 11, gives "sa propre magistrature" for *idias taxeōs*, but in a note (21, n. 37) Festugière also suggests "son propre rang dans la hiérarchie des sphères." This latter formulation comes close to the Neoplatonic usage of "order" (*taxis*) to mean a series of hierarchically related entities, including, at the higher levels, immaterial entities and, at the lower levels, material objects like stars; cf. Dodds, *Elements*, pp. 208–9, 267, 270; below, *Asclep*. 19 on "classes." For other treatments of such changes and their cosmological contexts, see *C.H.* XIII.7–12; *PGM* XIII.270–6 (Betz, p. 180); Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 22.

break through: Below, *C.H.* XI.19.

I.14 ***vault … framework:*** *kutos* (literally, "hollow vessel" or "pot") is Nock's emendation, following Scott, of *kratos* ("might" or "rule");

Festugière's rendering of *harmonias* is "armature," whence Nock's suggestion of "framework": NF I, 11, 21–2, nn. 39–40; "cosmic" is not in the Greek here or below, in sections 14–16, 19, 25, 26. The Greek for "stooped to look" is *parekupsen*; see J.Z. Smith, *Map*, pp. 167–8, citing Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.8.13; *Acts of Peter* 9.37.8–38.9 (Hennecke, *NTA*, II, p. 315); cf. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 243.

him … surfeit ⟨and⟩: "Him" (*hon*) is an emendation of *hēn* ("her"); "and" is an editorial addition; NF I, 11.

energy of the governors: Above, section 9.

water she … were lovers: Zielinski (1905), pp. 326–8, compares this "highly poetic" passage with the story of Hylas (*hulē* = matter?) in Propertius 1.20: when Hercules sent his beloved Hylas to fetch water, nymphs dazzled by his beauty lured him into a spring, where he drowned; Zielinski locates the moral of the story in sections 18–19, below, where desire is the cause of death; see also Plotinus, *Ennead*1.6.8, 2.9.10; Bousset, *Hauptprobleme*, p. 188; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 152–60, which explores connections with the biblical account of mankind's sexual fall.

wish and action: Here "wish" is *boulē*, on which see above, section 8.

I.15 ***essential man:*** For *ousiōdēs* see below, *Asclep*. 7, 19; NF I, 22, n. 41; FR I, 268–70, IV, 6; and Puech (1961–72), pp. 196–200, referring to the *Gospel of Thomas* 24, 50, 83–4, 88, and Zosimus, *On Apparatus* 10, on "the carnal Adam named Thoth according to his exterior frame. … As for the man who is within Adam, the spiritual man … I do not know his special name. … his common name is Light." See below, this section, on Zosimus; above, section 4, note on "light." Jackson, *Zosimus*, p. 50, points out that *phōs*, the common Attic word for light, is a contraction of *phaos*, the Homeric form, and that *phōs* in Homer is a term for "man." From a Gnostic point of view, the homophony provides an interesting pun. J.-E. Ménard (1977), p. 168, illustrates the notion of mankind's double nature by reference to *NHC* V.5.77.18–82.28. In this section the first three occurrences – at least – of *anthrōpos* refer to the human condition in general as a consequence of mankind's descent from the Primal Man; above, section 12.

subject to fate: See Festugière, *Evangile*, pp. 101–15 and *Asclep*. 39–40 on the general topic of *heimarmenē*. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 80–1, 102–8 (also *Historia*, pp. 200–2), discusses the account of the struggle

against fate in the book *On Apparatus* of Zosimus of Panopolis (Scott IV, 105–9; FR I, 239, 260–72; Jackson, *Zosimus*, pp. 3–7, 18–27, 46–7; Forbes, *Technology* I, pp. 131–42). Zosimus was an Egyptian who wrote in Greek on alchemy, theology and other topics around 300 CE. Reitzenstein connects the aforementioned work with a Hermetic doctrine of two souls (below, *C.H.* XVI. 15; *Asclep*.22) as an escape from fate described by Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.5.267–8.272; he makes this connection because Zosimus mentions a figure called "Bitos" who "engraved tablets" with Hermetic and Platonic contents, while Iamblichus reports that "the prophet Bitus" found Hermetic hieroglyphic tablets in Sais. Fowden, *EH* pp. 120, 150–3, agrees, concluding that "our two sources are talking about the same composition." For the many variations on the stories about messages carved on monuments, see FR I, 319–24. Bousset (1914), pp. 101–7, in interpreting as "hellenistic Gnosis" what the *Poimandres*says about fate and insisting (against J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 294–308) that these ideas are religious rather than philosophical, calls attention to the claim in *Chaldaean Oracles* 153 (Des Places, p. 103; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 211–13) that "the theurges do not fall among the herd ruled by fate"; cf. Bousset (1915), pp. 148–50. Reitzenstein also cites New Testament texts on the problem of release from fate and related powers of the material cosmos: I Cor. 2:6, 15:24; Romans 8:38; Eph. 2:2; Gal. 4:3–10; Col. 2:8–10, 15–20; above, section 9; below, section 20; Stroumsa, *Seed*, pp. 138–43.

cosmic framework: Above, section 14.

He is androgyne: Dodd, *Bible*, p. 151, explains that Philo interpreted Gen. 1:27 to mean that the divine image in which humans were created was without sexual determination or else bisexual. For androgynous Primal Man in a Gnostic creation myth, see the *Refutation* of Hippolytus, who in his account of the Naasenes discusses the figure of Attis in the mystery cults as follows (5.7.14–15; cf. 8.4): "For man is androgyne, they say…. Attis was castrated … and has passed over to the eternal substance above, where … there is neither female nor male but a new creation, a new man, who is androgyne"; cf. Gal. 3:28, 6:15; Eph. 2:15, 4:24; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 85; *Studien*, pp. 108–9; Bousset (1914), pp. 160–2; see also above, section 9, below *Asclep*. 20; *NHC* II.3.68.20–30, V.5.20–25; Mahé (1975a), pp. 137–8; NF I, 22, n. 43; Scott II, 45–6.

sleepless … masters: the words between "sleepless" and "masters" are supplied in Festugière's conjectural translation (NF I, 12, 22, n. 45) from a phrase (*hup'erōtos kai hupnou*) suggested by Reitzenstein to fill a lacuna.

I.16 ***O my mind:*** It is generally thought that these words are the end of a preceding phrase which has been lost; Scott I, 123, for example, has "Thereafter I said, 'Tell me the rest, O mind, for I …'" For other reconstructions, see NF I, 12.

the mystery: According to Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 160–2, "the Hermetist seems [here] to announce … the new and original element in his doctrine … [that] the seven men stand for empirical humanity in its first state…. [After] the fall … they have material bodies…. But beside the body … is the 'essential man.'" On *mustērion* as a technical term here and elsewhere in the Corpus (C .H . XVI.2; *Asclep*. 19, 21, 32, 37), see Sfameni Gasparro (1965), pp. 43–61; see also below, section 32, and *C.H*. IV.4–5, V.l, XIII.Title, 2–12, 16, 20, XIV.1.

cosmic framework: Above, section 14.

who … fire:"Who" emends *hou* to *hous*, and "fire" changes *patros*to *puros*, both in Nock's apparatus (NF I, 12).

seven men … governors: Above, note on "mystery" and section 9; note that the "seven men" are *hepta anthrōpous* above, section 12.

Be silent: Below, sections 30–1; *C.H*. XIII.2, 8, 16, 22; Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.8.7, 39.

I.17 ***⟨Earth⟩ was the female:*** NF I, 12, adds *gē* ("earth") after the particle *gar*.

shape … man became: Above, section 12.

cycle … kinds: The word "and" (*kai*) is a scribal insertion. Here and in section 18, "cycle" (*periodos*) probably refers to the Stoic theory of *apokatastasis* ("restoration" or "recurrence"), explicitly mentioned in *C.H*. VIII.4, XI.2, XII.15; *Asclep*. 13. The Stoics believed that the currently existing cosmos would eventually disappear in a great conflagration (*ekpurōsis*), only to be renewed identical in every detail and then to continue the cycle of destruction and restoration eternally. Based on earlier theories of astronomical cycles, the idea spread to other Hellenistic philosophies and religions, as in Proclus, *Elements of*

Theology, props. 198–200 and Acts 3:21. See: Scott II, 51–2; Hahm, *Cosmology*, pp. 185–95; Wilson (1967), p. 518; *TDNT* I, 390; NF I, 13, 90, n. 17, 155–7, n. 6; Dodds, *Elements*, pp. 301–3.

I.18 ***sundered:*** For fission of the androgyne, see the Gnostic texts cited above for section 15, as well as Plato, *Symposium* 189–93; Scott II, 52; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 165–7, refers also to Gen. 2:21–2, 7:15–16, as possible biblical motivations of the bisexual motif.

counsel of god: Above, section 8.

But … holy speech: Before these words, MS B, *Parisinus gr*. 1220, fourteenth century, of the Corpus inserts a long scholium by Michael Psellus (eleventh century) which notes Hermes' familiarity with Genesis but condemns him as a wizard (*goēs*) misled by Poimandres into a perverse reading of holy writ: NF I, xlix-li; Scott IV, 244–5; Braun, *Jean*, pp. 280–1.

Increase in increasing: Nock (NF I, 13) refers to Gen. 1:22, 28; 8:17; 9:7; see also Scott II, 53, and Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 162–7, who point out that the doubling of the verbs imitates an emphatic Hebrew construction which does not occur in any of the Genesis passages but turns up again in *C.H.* III.3; both Scott and Dodd conclude that events after the flood (Gen. 8:15–17) were the likeliest biblical point of reference for the author of the *Poimandres* at this point. Haenchen (1965), p. 177, and Betz (1970), pp. 467–8, maintain that the command, although a blessing in the biblical context, would have seemed a curse to the Hermetist.

⟨who⟩ is mindful: For *ho ennous*, NF I, 13, has "celui qui a l'intellect," but Nock (1947), p. 645, gives "with Nous"; NF inserts the definite article, following Turnebus. Betz (1970), pp. 465–84, interprets the second half of this sentence as a Hermetic interpretation of the Delphic *gnōthi sauton*, taken to mean "recognize that you are immortal and divine," as in I *Alcibiades* 130E; Cicero, *Tusculans* 1.22.52, 5.25.70, and other Platonic and Stoic texts, especially Philo, *On Dreams*1.10.52–60; see also Betz (1981), pp. 156–71; Reitzenstein, *Studien*, pp. 23–4.

I.18–19 ***desire … effects of death:*** For *erōta* NF I, 13, has "l'amour," and sexual love is certainly meant; in fact, from a Gnostic point of view, the concrete sexual act is itself the cause of death, so that "sexual activity" or "sexual intercourse" would be reasonable renderings as well. On *erōs* and

death in Gnosticism, see Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 118; Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 44–6, interprets this passage in the light of others expressing an ascetic contempt for the body: *C.H.* IV.5–7, VI. 3, VII.2, XI.21, XIII.1; *Asclep*. 6, 11, 22. Following Mahé (1976), 203, Quispel (1981), pp. 259–61, identifies *A.D.* 9.4 as the basis of the last sentence of section 18 and hence of Logion 67 of the *Gospel of Thomas* see also: Mahé, *Hermès* II, 393; Reitzenstein, *Studien*, p. 20. See also Brown, *Body*, for early Christian attitudes toward sex and the body.

I.19 ***providence … fate:*** The word "providence" represents *pronoia*; referring to *NHC* II.5.101.26–8 and VI.6.54.15, 59.5, Mahé, *Hermès* I, 97, points out the identification of Pronoia Sambathas with the Hebdomad or seventh sphere (below, section 26); see also Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 172–8, and above, sections 9 and 15 on "fate"; *C.H.* XIII. 14, 21, treats *pronoia* as "an instrument of the cosmos" along with necessity and nature; likewise XI.5; see also Keizer, *Discourse*, pp. 17–19, 35–6.

cosmic framework: Above, section 14.

recognized … chosen good: For "chosen" (*periousion*) see Arndt and Gingrich s.v. *periousios*, with references to Exod. 19:5, Deut. 7:6, Tit. 2:14, and other biblical texts; cf. *TDNT* VI, 57–8. Dodd (*Bible*, p. 167; *Fourth Gospel*, p. 32), however, translates the word as "beyond essence" or "absolute"; cf. FR III, p. 97; NF I, 23, n. 49; and Scott II, 55, with an emendation to *huperousion*. For *gnōsis* ("knowledge") and *anagnorisis* ("self-recognition") as salvation, see below, sections 26–7.

loved … desire … darkness: For "desire" (*erōtos*), see above, sections 18–19. Braun, *Jean*, pp. 257–61, suggests parallels here and in sections 14 and 24 to the account of the Essenes in Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.154–5.

sensibly: For *aisthētōs* Festugière (NF I, 13, 23, n. 50) gives "dans ses sens" but calls the word "difficult," and Nock suggests "d'une manière qui peut être perçue par les sens."

I.20 ***watery nature … drinks:*** The verb in the manuscripts (*ardeuetai*) corresponding to "drinks" literally means "is irrigated"; NF I, 13, 23, n. 51, has "où s'abreuve la mort," referring in the apparatus to Reitzenstein's emendations to *aruetai* and *artuetai*. For "watery nature," see above, section 4; FR I, 270, connects this treatment of the body's origin with

Zosimus, *On Apparatus* 12: "the body of Adam … issued from fate … formed of the four elements."

I.21 ***advances toward god***: Alternative translation of *eis auton*: "toward himself"; NF I, 14, 23, n. 52.
the man came: Above, section 12.
You say: The manuscripts put this in the first person, *phēmi* rather than *phēs*, which is Reitzenstein's conjecture, adopted in NF I, 14.
you are from light: As in Festugière's translation, the word "you" assumes the reading *seauton* for *heauton* in most manuscripts and *auton* in the texts of Reitzenstein and Nock; alternative translations: "god is from" or "the man is from"; NF I, 14, 24, n. 53. J.-E. Ménard (1977), pp. 161–3, compares *NHC* 1.2.3.24–34, 14.8–17.
Let the … himself: Above, section 18, for an almost identical injunction; Betz (1970), p. 468; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 51.

I.22 ***the reverent*:** In the Greek treatises *eusebeia*, *eusebeō* and *ensebēs* occur seventeen times. In some cases, "piety" would translate *eusebeia* better than "reverence," but I have used the latter consistently. In *TDNT* VII, 1789, Foerster concludes that "the true content of *eusebeia* for the educated Greek is reverent and wondering awe at the … divine" but that "*eusebeia* can be *aretē* … one virtue among others." "Reverence" better renders *eusebeia* as an attitude toward the gods, while "piety" more strongly implies a virtue possessed by an individual. Fowden (*EH*, p. 107) emphasizes the role of the ethical virtues in Hermetic initiation, calling piety "the natural function of man, and especially of the philosopher who aspires to gnosis," and he points out the many Hermetic exhortations to *eusebeia: C.H.* VI.5, IX.4, X. 9, XVI.11; *S.H.* IIB.2–3; see also *Asclep.* 1, 22; Ps. 33:16–17; Reitzenstein, *Studien*, p. 26; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 170–4.

I.23 ***thoughtless … irreverent*:** See Zielinski (1905), p. 332, and *C.H.* IX. 3 for the interpretation of this passage as a list of seven planetary vices, which Reitzenstein (*Studien*, pp. 26–7) connected with Iranian sources; Haenchen (1965), p. 179, finds a parallel in the two figures of vice in the sixth "Similitude" of the *Shepherd* of Hermas; cf. Scott IVF, 358.
demon … assailing: Reading *titrōskei auton* ("wounds") for *thrōskei auton*, marked unintelligible in NF I, 15, 24, n. 58; cf. II, 377, n. 183, on

Asclep. 22. Festugière (NF I, 24, nn. 55, 57) opposes this *timōros daimōn* ("avenging demon") to Mind's role as "gatekeeper" (*pulōros*) in section 22, above, which he interprets as a kind of *daimōn paredros* or helping spirit; see also: *C.H.* XII.4, XIII.7; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 82, 89–90; Cumont, *Lux*, pp. 229–30; Bousset (1914), p. 151, referring to the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Reuben* 2:12; *Judah* 20; *Simeon* 4:4–6; *Zebulon* 9:7–8; *Asher* 6:4–6.

{*This*} *tortures*: Reading Nock's conjecture of *touto* for *touton*, the latter marked unintelligible; NF I, 15, 24, n. 59.

I.24 **⟨*about*⟩ *the way up*:** A scribe inserted the word "about" (*peri*); NF I, p. 15; from classical times the word *anodos* ("way up") was a technical term in religious usage; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 176.

releasing … body: See below, note on *C.H.* XIII. 1, "born again."

give over your temperament:NF I, 15, 24, n. 60, translates *to ēthos* as "ton moi habituel," but in *HMP*, p. 65, Festugière has "le tempérament qui dépend, pour chacun, de la manière dont se sont mélangés en lui les quatre éléments." "Give over" involves the emendation of *paradidōsin* to *paradidōs* in NF and earlier editions; cf. Scott II, 57–8; Haenchen (1965), p. 180.

particular sources … energies: FR III, 130; cf. NF I, 15; Scott II, 58–9.

feeling … nature: Zielinski (1905), pp. 328–9, identifies the sequence *thumos* ("feeling"), *epithumia* ("longing"), *alogon* ("irrational") as a reflection of the tripartite psychology of faculties that Plato called *epithumētikos* ("coveting," "desiring," "appetitive"), *thumoeidēs* ("spirited," "hot-tempered") and *logistikos* ("rational") in *Republic* 435–44, 580–1, *Phaedrus* 253–5, *Timaeus* 69–72 and elsewhere; at *Republic* 436A (Shorey trans.), for example, Socrates says that we "learn with one part of ourselves, feel anger with another, and yet with a third desire the pleasures of nutrition and generation." See also: Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, pp. 102, 174–5, 194, 289–91, 327; Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 28, 73–4; Peters, *Terms*, pp. 61, 170.

I.25 ***Thence … ambush:*** For "cosmic framework," see above, section 14. The subject of this long sentence is unspecified in the Greek; NF I, 15, has "l'homme." Although Reitzenstein's initial study of *C.H.* I in *Poimandres* (1904) emphasized its Egyptian background, his *Studien zum antiken*

Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland (1926, with H. H. Schaeder) shifted the focus to ancient Iran, in particular to a lost Avestan work, the *Damdaδ-Nask*, which he dated to the fifth century BCE and took as his main proof that (*Studien*, p. 23) "the whole creation story of the Poimandres stems from the canonical formulation of the Persian teaching on creation" and that (*HMR*, p. 12) the first Hermetic treatise is "a Greek version of the *Damdaδ-Nask*." Reitzenstein's conclusion was roughly in line with the broader findings of Bousset (1901), pp. 168–9, 267–8, that the concept of the soul-voyage came into Greek and Judaeo-Christian thought from Iranian sources by way of Mithraism. Reitzenstein described the *Damdaδ-Nask* as a revelation from Ahura Mazda on creation, eschatology and related theological topics whose protagonist, the Primal Man Gayomard, journeys through the heavens after death, as seven metals associated with the seven planets and seven governors (above, section 9) flow from him into the earth.

Seeing in this Iranian myth striking similarities to *C.H.* I.25 and its context, Reitzenstein followed Bousset in comparing both to such Greco-Roman formulations of the soul-voyage as that preserved by Servius in his commentary on *Aeneid* 6.127, 439, 714, 11.51. Bousset (1915), pp. 134–50, maintained that the attack by the Christian apologist, Arnobius, on strange religions and especially their eschatologies in the second book of *Against the Pagans* (*c.* 304–10) was aimed at the presentation of this material by Cornelius Labeo who, according to Bousset, had been dated before 126 CE and had used Hermetic teachings on the fate of the soul; thus, an early date for Labeo suggested an even earlier date for some *Hermetica*; but for Labeo as dependent on Porphyry, and hence much later, see Mastandrea, *Labeo*, pp. 6–7, 108–13, 127–34. For other relevant views of Bousset, see: *Hauptprobleme*, pp. 54–8, 202–9, 361–5; and (1914), pp. 134–9, 155–9.

On the order of the seven planets associated with these moral faults, see above, sections 9 and 23; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 206–8; and Festugière, *HMP*, pp. 66, 121–30, who points out in NF I, 25, n. 62, the series of seven vices listed by Irenaeus in his account of the Gnostics (*Against Heresies* 1.29.4; Layton, GS, p. 168): "lack of acquaintance, … arrogance, … evil, jealousy, envy, discord and desire"; cf. Scott II, 60–3. *NHC* II.5.106.27–107.17 lists seven male and seven female vices who are the "seven androgynous sons" of Death, and in *NHC* VI. 6.63.16–21 appear

seven "ousiarchs"– "heads-of-owjia," or "rulers of substance" – on whom see *Asclep*. 19; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 39, 133–4; idem (1974b), p. 62. *Reuben* 2–3 in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* describes two sets of "seven spirits of error … appointed by Beliar against man"; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 52–3, also refers to the "seven intertwined comely demons" in *Testament of Solomon* 8. See also notes on *C.H.* III.2 and VII.2; Arnobius, *Against the Pagans* 2.13–19, 22, 25, 28–9, 33–7, 43–5, 52, 62; Macrobius, *Commentary on Scipio's Dream* 1.12; Proclus, *Timaeus Commentary* 1.147.29–148.7, 3.355.12–19 (Festugière trans., I, 199; V, 237); Scott IV, 7–8, I VF, 474–83; FR III, 50–2; Goodspeed, *Literature*, pp. 182–3; Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologúmena*, pp. 304–11; Flamant (1981), pp. 138–9; Mussies (1981), pp. 315–17.

***arrogance … wealth*:** At the start of *S.H.* XXIV, Isis explains to Horus that there are four places (*topoi*) in the All (*en tō panti*): sky, aether, air and holy earth. The Craftsman rules (*archei*) the gods who dwell in the sky; the sun rules the stars in the aether; the moon rules the demonic souls in the air; and the reigning king rules men and other animals on earth. The rulers (*archontes*) are emanations of a higher king, and the sun is a mightier ruler than the moon. *C.H.* XI. 7 describes "light shining down from the energy of the god who is father of all good, ruler (*archontos*) and commander of the whole order of the seven worlds." In this context, we may assume that the *archontikēn prophanian* mentioned here in fourth place refers to a characteristic of the solar ruler or *archōn*. *Prophania* is an unusual word, for which LSJ gives "eminence" or "distinction," but *huperēphanian*, a scribal correction meaning "arrogance," is clearer in context. NF I, 15, has "l'ostentation du commandement." For *archontes*in the New Testament, see especially Matt. 12:24; John 12:31; I Cor. 2:6–8; Eph. 2:2. NF I, 16, has "les appétits illicites que donne la richesse" for *tas aphormas tas kakas tou ploutou* ("evil … wealth"). For "recklessness" (*propeteia*) see below, *C.H.* XIII.7, 12. The concept of "daring" (*tolma*) plays an important part in explanations of the fall as a punishment for a primal sin committed in heaven, rather than as retribution for a direct choice of earthly humans. Pythagoreans used *tolma* to refer to the Dyad as distinct from the Monad (below, note on *C.H.* IV. 10), and Numenius – like the author of *C.H.* I – saw the soul's descent as an offence of its own choosing, an opinion reflected in earlier teachings of Plotinus, *Ennead* 5.1.1.1–4: "the souls who have forgotten the father … for them the

beginning of evil is daring (*tolma*)"; cf. 5.2.2.6; 6.9.5.29. In his later work, however, Plotinus condemned the Gnostics for claiming that soul's wish to create the world was *tolma* (2.9.11.12; cf. 4.3.13). See: Dodds, *Anxiety*, pp. 23–6; cf. FR III, 83, 88, 94–6; *S.H.* XXIII.24; *C.H.* XVI.11.

I.26 ***cosmic … human*:** As in section 25, above, the subject is unspecified; NF I, 16, has "il entre." On "cosmic framework" see above, section 14.

***region of the ogdoad* :** Literally, "the ogdoadic nature" (*phusin*), which was the eighth sphere of the fixed stars, next in order after Saturn. In Valentinian and other Gnosticisms the common post-Aristotelian cosmology of concentric and countable spheres gave rise to rich theological elaborations. The Hebdomad, seven planetary heavens created by a maleficent Demiurge, constitutes the lower world that imprisons the Gnostic, who wishes to escape to the next highest level, the Ogdoad, which is the eighth level counting up from the earth. Looking down from the heights of divinity, however, "Ogdoad" becomes the name of the four next pairs (*suzugiai*; see below, note on *C.H.* VI. 1) of divinities lower down within the Pleroma. In still another sense, the Ogdoad is the divine realm of Jesus and Sophia (Wisdom), but it is still outside the eternal Pleroma (below, note on *C.H.* VI.4). For the Magical Papyri, see above, note on *C.H.* I.9, "seven governors," as well as *PGM* XIV.735–59 (Betz, pp. 189–90), where, as Festugière (NF II, 215–16, n. 65) points out, Ogdoas is "the god who directs all things throughout the creation." Reitzenstein (*Studien*, pp. 28, 119; *HMR*, pp. 50–1) identifies the Ogdoad of *C.H.* I with the Iranian Garoôman or eighth heaven. *NHC* VI.6, given the title "The Ogdoad and the Ennead" by Mahé, opens with a promise to "introduce my mind into the Ogdoad and then to introduce me into the Ennead." Later (58.17–20, 59.28–32) follow two visions of the Ogdoad full of souls and angels silently singing and finally "addressing their hymns to the Ennead and to its powers." Mahé (*Hermes* I, 35–41, 88–9, 114–15, 119–20) points out that the Coptic root of the modern place name, Ashmounein, site of an ancient Hermopolis, represents the word "eight" (*Hmnw*) and refers to an octet of gods venerated there and eventually associated with Thoth/Hermes. Likewise, Heliopolis was the city of a divine Ennead, also linked with Thoth: below, *C.H.* XIII. 15; XVI.Title; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 53–5, 59–68, 114–15; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp.

304–8; Méautis, *Her- moupolis*, pp. 15–31; Wace, *Hermopolis*, p. 1; Boylan, *Thoth*, pp. 49–52, 149–51, 156–8; Bleeker, *Hathor*, pp. 18–19, 113–14, 151–2; Hani, *Plutarque*, pp. 31–7; Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 8–9; Layton, GS, pp. 169, 174–5, 196–7, 210–11, 225, 291, 429; Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*, pp. 179–81, 190–7; Pétrement (1967), pp. 477–87; Daniélou, *Doctrine* I, pp. xv-xvii, 173–81; FR III, 90, 123, 130–1; NF I, 16, 25, n. 64; Scott II, 63–4; Mahé (1974b), p. 63; Keizer, *Discourse*, pp. 26–7.

***with the blessed*:** "Blessed" translates Festugière's substitution of *hosiois* for *oust*; FR III, 132, n. 2; cf. NF I, 16. But Philonenko (1975b), pp. 210–11, prefers the original reading, translated as "beings" and referred to the "living creatures" of Ezek. 1:5, as illustrated by *Apocalypse of Abraham* 18.1–3. LXX Ezek. 1:5 has "four living things" (*tessarōn zōōn*) for '*arba*' *hayyoth* in the Hebrew text.

***certain powers … sweet voice*:** Scott II, 65–7, compares the "powers" with the hypostasized *dunameis* in Philo but also mentions similar Gnostic conceptions, on which see Layton, *GS*, pp. 32, 37–40, 106, 224–5. As above, "region" is literally "nature"; "that exist" corresponds to the *ousōn* accidently omitted in NF I, 16, but inserted after *ogdoatikēn* by Festugière in FR III, 130, n. 3; NF IV, 150, n.5. Instead of "sweet (*hēdeia*) voice," which is Nock's reading and that of most manuscripts, Reitzenstein in *Poimandres*, pp. 55–8 (also Dodd, *Bible*, p. 176), prefers "their own (*idta*)," citing *Testament of Job* 48–51, I Cor. 13:1 and other texts, but in *Studien*, p. 28, he reverts to *hēdeia*, considering it confirmed by his Iranian source, which locates a "sweet melodic voice" in the eighth heaven or Garo*δ*man (above, note on "ogdoad"). See also the *Hymn of the Pearl* 108.13 (Layton, GS, p. 375), cited in NF I, 25, n. 66.

final good … made god: Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 370–1, traces *to agathon telos* ("final good"; literally, "good goal" or "la fin bienheureuse" in Festugière's translation) to the "language of the mysteries," citing Plato, *Symposium* 210E. Bousset, *Kyrios*, pp. 428–31, also places the "ideal of deification" in the context of the mysteries, citing *PGM* IV.719–23: "O lord, while being born again, I am passing away; while growing and having grown, I am dying … as you … have established the mystery." For other accounts of human diviniz- ation, see: *C.H.* IV.7, X.6–7, 24–5; XI.20; XII.l; XIII.1, 3, 10, 14, 22; *Asclep*. 6, 22,

41; *NHC* VI.6.63; Trôger, *Gnosis*, pp. 59–60; Fowden, *EH*, p. 111 ; and Daumas (1982), pp. 14–15, who cites several Egyptian parallels.

I. 26–7 ***Having learned … earthborn men:*** In the latter sections of *C.H.* I, Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 277–311, detects a three-part structure of revelation, thanksgiving and call, comparing it to similar patterns in Rom. 11:25–12:2 and Matt. 11:25–30; Nock (1925), pp. 26–7, identifies signs of the diatribe form. Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, p. 23, collects other instances of the verb "save" (here *sōthē*) and related words in the *Hermetica*, noting that they are few – eleven instances outside the Stobaeus fragments – despite the strong soteriological interest that runs throughout the treatises (*C.H.* I.29; VII.1–2; IX.5; X. 15; XIII. 1, 19; *Asclep*. 41) and explaining the rarity of *sōtēria* and its relatives from the fact that Hermetic salvation is *gnōsis*, as in X.15 (or *anagnōrisis*, "self-recognition," as above, section 19). Van Moorsel also (pp. 83–4) lists instances of *hodēgos* ("guide") and related words: below, sections 28–9, 32; *C.H.* IV.11, VII.2, IX.10, XI.21, etc. On "humans" (*anthrōpois*), "people" (*laoi*) and "men" (*andres*) here and in section 28, see above, section 12.

I.27 ***As he … empowered:*** For *tauta eipōn ho Poimandrēs emoi emigē tats dunamesin* NF I, 16, has "Ayant ainsi parlé, Poimandrès, sous mes yeux, se mêla aux Puissances," which suggests that Poimandres undergoes spiritual transformation in the presence of the narrator; another reading is "As he was saying this, Poimandres joined me to the powers," which would require changing *emoi* to *eme* but would have the advantage of making a better transition to "empowered" (*dunamōtheis*) in the next sentence, on which see below, section 32, and *C.H.* XVI.2; NF I, 25, n. 68, cites Hippolytus, *Refutation* 7.32.5 and *PGM* 11.121, IV. 197, XII.266, XIII.277 (Betz, pp. 16–17, 41, 163, 180), on the magical powers (*dunameis*) needed for the soul's struggle against the archons who block its ascent to the Ogdoad.

proclaiming … and knowledge: Below, section 29; *C.H.* IV.4, IX.4; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 55; Scott I VF, 360; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 133; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 179–80; Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, p. 252; and Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 1–6, 110–11, who reads the Hermetic kerygma in light of the "missionary propaganda" of Acts 17:22–31.

***surrendered … unreasoning sleep*:** See below, *C.H.* VII.1; LXX Is. 24:20, 29:9–10; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 180, 187–9; Nock (1936), pp. 447–8; MacRae (1967), pp. 496–507.

I.28 ***earthborn men:*** Above, sections 12 and 27, for *andres gēgeneis*.
right to share: The Greek for "right" is *exousian*, on which see above, section 13, and below, section 32; *C.H.* XVI. 14.
think again: The verb here is *metanoeō*, which, according to Behm (*TDNT* IV, 979), "for the Greeks never suggests an alteration in the total moral attitude, a profound change in life's direction, a conversion…." However, in *Conversion*, pp. 4, 179–80, 296, Nock has "repent" for *metanoeō* in *C.H.* I, comparing the related noun *metanoia* to the Greek *epistrophē* and the Latin *conversio* (Plato, *Republic* 518D; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.27.77) and citing the *Tabula* of Cebes (first century CE) for *metanoia* as implying "a momentary realization rather than the entry on a state: it is a word used by general rather than by philosophical writers. Cebes wrote a moral dialogue … [on] the good life and the bad life: the only deliverance from the bad life is given by Metanoia…. The goal is deliverance; *sōzesthai* occurs eight times in this short treatise…. The ultimate authority lies in the commands given by the Daimonion to each man … not … as a matter of purely intellectual conviction. … In the last struggle Christian dogma was in conflict not with the free Greek spirit, but with other dogma … seeking to save souls." See also: Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 180–6, who has "repent" and cites LXX Is. 46:8 and other biblical and Jewish texts, especially the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Gad* 5.7; *Judah* 15.4; *Benjamin* 5.4); NF I, 17, 26, n. 70, translating "résipiscence" and alluding to "the Oriental character of the *metanoia*"; Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 134–9; above, sections 26–7; below, *C.H.* IX. 10.
shadowy: The light is "shadowy" (*skoteinou*) because it is the light of this dying world, as opposed to the light of life, above, sections 4, 9; *C.H.* VII.2; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 149; II, pp. 26–9; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 300–1.

I.29 ***way of death***: For the alternative to the way of death, see above, note on section 26, "to be made god"; see also Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 183–7, and Pearson (1981), p. 341, on biblical and Jewish parallels; and Haenchen (1965), p. 185, on Acts 2:12–15.

ambrosial water: Festugière (*HMP*, p. 103, n. 8) cites *Acts of Thomas* 2.25 (Hennecke, *NTA* II, p. 455) on the ambrosial water (cf. *C.H.* XVIII.11) and points out that the idea of proclamation (*kērussein*) in section 27, above, occurs in a similar context in *C.H.* IV.4; see also Keizer, *Discourse*, p. 58.

I.30 ***Within … recorded*:** For *anegrapsamēn eis emauton*, NF I, 17, 26, n. 75a, has "je gravai en moi-même"; cf. Philonenko (1979), pp. 371–2.

silence … good: The Valentinian myth (Layton, GS, p. 281) has the original deep emitting a preprinciple (above, *C.H.* I.8) and depositing it "like sperm in the womb of the silence that coexisted with it." See also: above, section 16; below, section 31; *C.H.* X.5, 9; XIII.2; *A.D.* 5.2; *NHC* VI.6.56.10–12, 58.20–6, 59.14–22, 60.1–2; Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.3.263; NF I, 26, n. 76; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 34, 105, II, 317, 373; Daumas (1982), pp. 22–4.

***birthing … sovereignty*:** Layton, *GS*, p. 458, translates: "This happened to me because I received discourse about the realm of absolute power from my intellect, that is, from the Poimandres," but NF I, 17, 26, nn. 76a–77, reads *tou tēs authentias logou* ("word of sovereignty," cf. section 2, above), rejecting Reitzenstein's conjecture of *ton tēs authentias logon*. With *logou* in the genitive and in apposition with *Poimandrou*, there is no direct object in the accusative for the active participle *labonti* ("was receptive"); Festugière cites examples of such a use of the verb. See also FR III, 168; Festugière (1951b), p. 485.

arrived:NF I, 17, 27, n. 78, renders *ēlthon* as "Et me voici donc," comparing the expression to the words of Jesus in John 10:10 and to a "password" of the Marcosians, as in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.21.5; cf. *C.H.* XIII.3.

I.31 ***Holy is god … praises:*** See Pearson (1981), pp. 342–5, especially on *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.33–5, 8.5, 9, 12, 15, 37, as a Greek vehicle for Jewish liturgy. Philonenko (1975b), pp. 204–11, noting the rarity of *hagios* ("holy") in pagan sources, traces the triple use of this term to Isaiah 6:3, the Kedusha, and the first, second and fourth of the Eighteen Benedictions. He also ([1979], pp. 369–71) reads the sentences preceding and following the prayer in the context of Deut. 6:5–9 and the Shema. Mahé (*Hermès* II, pp. 433–6) agrees that this prayer contains elements of Jewish liturgy, but

he also detects "sentences" (below, notes on *C.H.* VIII.2, IX. 1) that link the *Hermetica* to Egyptian gnomological literature. For the version of the prayer preserved in Berlin Papyrus 9794, see Reitzenstein and Wendland (1910); Reitzenstein, *Studien*, pp. 160–1; NF I, 18; and for other Hermetic prayers, see *C.H.* V. 10–11 ; XIII. 16–20; *Asclep*. 41; NF I, 27, n. 9. Scott II, 11–12, 69, who thinks that *C.H.* I was written some time in the second century CE, takes the existence of the prayer in this third-century papyrus as important evidence for dating. He also notes that the collection of prayers in the papyrus is Christian, which says something about the compatibility of Hermetic and Christian piety. Carcopino, *Rome*, pp. 277–83, connected the triple structure of the prayer with a particular appearance of the muse Euterpe in a Hermetic context; below, *Asclep*. 9.

***whose counsel*:** Above, section 8; "whose will is accomplished" would perhaps be clearer.

***wishes … people*:** No word corresponding to "people" appears in the Greek, only "is known by his own" (*ginōsketai tois idiots*). Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 287, and Bousset, *Kyrios*, pp. 88–9, refer to *C.H.* X.15; Gal. 4:8–9; I Cor. 13:12. Mahé (1984), p. 56, finds a resonant passage in *V.F.* A, with parallels in *C.H.* III.3, VII.2, X.15, *Asclep*. 8 and *NHC* VI.8.68.10–15. See also FR IV, 56; *C.H.* XIII.6; cf. NF I, 18, 27, n. 80.

word … that are: Haenchen (1965), p. 187.

all nature … image: FR IV, 61; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 195.

nature … figure: Daumas (1982), pp. 17–19, interprets the difficulty of the Greek as reflecting the inability of the Egyptian language to express directly so abstract a term as "nature"; see also FR IV, 61; cf. NF I, 18, 27, n. 81.

surpass … excellence: Daumas (1982), pp. 21–2, cites an Egyptian parallel.

silence … unsayable: FR IV, 2–5, 59–78, calls attention to this appeal to the "unknown god" and to its implication of divine transcendence; cf. *C.H.* IV.9; VII.2; X.5–6, 9; XIII.6.

speech … soul: Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 116–27, noting the absence of *logikē thusia* ("speech offering") in the Septuagint, its presence in Old Testament pseudepigrapha (*Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Levi* 3.6), New Testament parallels (Rom. 12:1–2; I Pet. 2:5), and the evidence in Philo (*On Special Laws* 1.191, 201, 272, 277, 283), concludes that the

Hermetic *logikē thusia* is an enthusiastic state, not an intentional process, and he likens it to a *eucharistia* ("thanksgiving"), "the word-vocables of which are *logikai thusiai*cf. Reitzenstein, *HMR* pp. 36–8, 97, 416; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 333–4; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 196–8; Tröger, *Gnosis*, pp. 52–4. Daumas (1982), pp. 21–2, cites an Egyptian parallel for *logikai thusiai*, and NF I, 19, 27, n. 83, has "sacrifices en paroles," admitting that this phrase cannot capture all the nuances of the term, on which see also Fowden (*EH*, p. 147), who identifies "the concept of 'mentar (or 'spiritual') sacrifice" with the "hymns of praise and thanksgiving" such as those in section 31 or in *C.H.* XIII. 17–21; see also *Asclep*. 41.

Mahé, *Hermès* I, 56, 110, believes that the corresponding Coptic phrase in *NHC* VI.6.57.19, can be taken to refer to a sacrament, thus differing with Festugière (FR I, 81–4) on the question of Hermetic religion as a cultic and social reality, what Reitzenstein (*Poimandres*, pp. 8, 35–6, 58, 114, 146, 154, 159–60, 213–16) commonly and controversially called a "congregation" (*Gemeinde*): "we also believe," writes Mahé, "that *C.H.* I, *C.H.* XIII et *NH* VI6 provide evidence that there were communities placed under the patronage of Hermes in which … prayer, characterized as *logikē thusia* ... 'sacrifice of speech (*discours*),'… could have the place of a true sacrament … an efficacious symbol." Festugière, on the contrary, found "no trace in the Hermetic literature of ceremonies belonging to supposed believers in Hermes, nothing that resembles sacraments…. There is no clergy, no appearance of hierarchical organization, no degrees of initiation…. On the contrary … Hermetism forthrightly expresses its loathing for material acts of worship" ; cf. below, *C.H.* XIII.Title. For the phrase "heart and soul," cf. *PGM* III.590–5 (Betz, p. 33); Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 151, 156.

I.32 ***Grant … knowledge*:** Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 157, refers to *PGM* 111.605–10 (Betz, p. 34).

give me power: Above, section 27; FR IV, 56.

I believe … witness:The verb "believe" translates *pisteuō* for this positive evaluation of *pistis*, which would be unusual in a pagan Greek source, Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 198–200, refers to LXX Is. 43:10 and various texts of Philo; see also *C.H.* IX. 10.

wishes … sanctification: The Greek has no words for "the work of," only *sunagiazein*, an unusual word for which LSJ has "share in holiness."

NF I, 19, 28, n. 88, has "te prêter aide dans l'œuvre de sanctification." An alternative translation is "wishes to be as holy as you are holy"; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 196; *Fourth Gospel*, p. 35.

***provided … authority*:** Above, sections 13, 16 and 28, and also Ferguson (Scott I VF, 359–60; Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 294) who interprets *paredōkas* ("provided") and *exousian* ("authority") as referring to secret knowledge of the mysteries, magic and alchemy. Ferguson – like Norden, who was interested primarily in New Testament parallels such as Matt. 11:25–30, Rom. 11:25 – explains that "*exousia* ... involves the notion first of knowledge (*gnōsis*) passed on, then of the authority conferred upon the initiate … [who] becomes a *kērux* ['herald'] or *hodēgos* ['guide']"; above, sections 26–7, 29; *C.H.* IV.4. For a scholastic conception of *paradosis* in the *Hermetica*, see FR I, 319–24, II, 34–50, which interprets the form of the Hermetic treatises as arising from three levels of school instruction in philosophy: first, oral teaching, as implied in *C.H.* XII.8; second, course notes (*hupomnēmata*), as in *C.H.* XIV; third, the finished and edited work (*sungramma*), as in *S.H.* VI. Festugière concludes that the *Hermetica* reveal "certain scholastic habits appropriate to a small circle of intimates in which a master seeks to convert his disciples to the true life of the soul; it is a private lesson … whose aim is spiritual"; see also Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 80–3, on this passage and *C.H.* I.26; V.l; XII.9, 12; XIII.1–3, 15–165; XIV.l; *Asclep.* 1, 10, 19–20; but cf. Bousset, *KyrioSy* p. 89; Tröger, *Gnosis*, pp. 62–4.

II

Title Reitzenstein and other scholars believe that the title "From Hermes to Tat: Universal Discourse," which occurs in the manuscripts at this point, belongs to another treatise which has been lost. Thus, the second treatise has no title. Stobaeus reproduced a large portion of this treatise through section 12 in his *Anthology*, which Nock uses frequently to correct the manuscripts of the Corpus for *C.H.* II. FR II, 9, classifies it as a "teaching discourse that begins with a dialogue and ends with a homily," joined by transitions which are "quite loose, like those in the *Asclepius*." Ferguson (Scott I VF, 360) describes it as "a Stoic-Peripatetic debate on the question whether there is a Void or Nonentity without the Cosmos …

[which] adopts a third alternative, that the surrounding space both encircles and moves the Cosmos." See also: Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 193; Scott II, 75; NF I, xiii, 32.

II.1 ***Asclepius*:** This character is mentioned twenty times in the second, sixth, ninth and tenth Greek treatises; in the Latin *Asclepius* his name occurs forty-two times. The original Egyptian Asclepius was Imhotep, an official of the Third Dynasty whose fame in medicine, architecture, writing, astrology and other arts caused later generations to deify him and treat him as a son of Ptah and godson of the great Thoth. His most famous accomplishment was the step pyramid of King Djoser, who died *c*. 2600 BCE, but the period of his greatest popularity did not begin until the XXVIth dynasty, culminating in the Ptolemaic era. In statuary he was depicted seated, holding an unrolled papyrus, wearing a scribe's apron and the cap of Ptah. In Alexandria a statue showed him in Greek costume, with Thoth's sacred baboon. His worship was especially strong in Memphis; the likely site of his temple there was in north Sakkara, where the earliest records calling Thoth the "thrice-greatest" were found (above, *C.H.* I.Title). Eventually, the Greek-speaking population of Egypt identified him with Asclepius, son of Apollo and god of healing, but he was also worshipped as Imouthes, as in *S.H.* XXIII.6 and XXVI.9. The Greek Asclepius was preeminently a god of healing, shown with shoes and chiton in statuary to emphasize his human origins; his attributes were the traveller's staff and the serpent of rejuvenation. Incubation was common in his temples, which became widespread in the Hellenistic period, and Christians saw him as a rival to Christ, whom he somewhat resembled as merciful healer. See: FR I, 85; Scott III, 223; Nock, *Conversion*, pp. 86–8; Sethe, *Imhotep*, pp. 3–26; Pietschmann, PW II/2, cols. 1642–97; Carcopino, *Rome*, pp. 252–8; Rose, *Religion*, pp. 111–12; Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius* I, pp. 166–78, 424–5, II, pp. 78–9, 124–31, 160–1, 214–31, 251–7; Wildung, *Saints*, pp. 31–77.

***for that … larger than the moved*:** Literally, "for that in which the moved is moved to be larger"; cf. NF I, 32, n. 1.

***And that in which*:** Following the editorial correction of *tēn* to *to* before *en hō* ("in which"); NF I, 32.

II.2 ***This cosmos:*** The definite article (*ho*) before *kosmos* is an editorial insertion; NF I, 32.

II.4 ***Place … is god:*** For "place" as a name of god, see Scott II, pp. 88–91; Copenhaver (1980), pp. 490–9; NF I, 39–40, nn. 14, 17, lists other Hermetic texts that comment on God's relation to *topos: C .H.* V. 10, IX.6, XI.18.

II.5 ***even without essence:*** For *ousia* ("essence") and *ousiōdēs*, see *C.H.* I.15, *Asclep*. 7, 19, and for the question of God's having an essence, see *C.H.* VI.4, XII. 1; NF I, 33, n.3.

II.5 ***not … object of thought*:** See below, note on *C.H.* IX. 9.

II5–6 ***Otherwise … capable of containing:*** "This passage," writes Scott II, 93, "is almost hopelessly corrupt"; cf. NF I, 33–5, nn. 3–5, where Festugière provides an alternative translation by Einarson and mentions the Neoplatonic problem of God's self-knowledge, implying an ungodly duality. For the phrase "not … object of thought," see below, note on *C.H.* IX.9.

II.6 ***as place … as god:*** In both cases "as" (*hōs*) is an emendation of the article *ho*; NF I, 33.

capable of containing: NF I, 33, 35, n. 5, has "capable de contenir toutes choses" for the single word *chōrētikē*.

II.7 ***by a contrary … contrariety itself:*** This passage is marked unintelligible and not translated in NF I, 34, 36, n. 7, but the note includes a translation suggested by Einarson.

those bears: See below, *C.H.* V.4; Scott I VF, 661–2; Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologumena*, p. 311.

but when the going … going around: Another passage marked unintelligible and untranslated in NF I, 34; my approximation from a conjecture in the apparatus assumes *enistatai* ("is prevented") instead of *ei hestē* ("if it stood still"), but other problems remain.

II.8 ***can see:****hupopipton* (literally, "subject to" the eyes) is an emendation of *pipton* in the MSS and *epipipton* in Stobaeus; NF I, 34.
spirit … incorporeal: Above, *C.H.* I.5; Scott I VF, 363.

II.10 ***emptiness … tongue*****:** *kenō* ("emptiness") is Foix de Candale's emendation of *ekeinō*, and the imperative *euphēmei* is Parthey's correction of *eu phēs*\ NF I, 35.
substantiality … substance … subsistent: The Greek words in question are *huparxis* and *huparchō*, which NF I, 36, 38, n. 11, renders as *réalité* and *est réel*.

II.11 ***in their substance:*** NF I, 36, 38, n. 12, has "du fait même de leur réalité"; above, note on section 10.

II.12 ***What … incorporeal:*** Festugière (NF I, 29–30) believes that *C.H.* II, VIII and IX are in diatribe form, stating a philosophical premise as the basis of moral and theological conclusions, but the coherence of the material organized within the diatribe in *C.H.* II is not strong. Referring to *C.H.* I.27–9, IV.6–7, 11, X.19, XI.21, *Asclep.* 10 and other texts, Nock (1925), p. 26, describes the diatribe as "a species of popular sermon or causerie, commonly written in a pointed style and rich in vivid similes and metaphors." The notion of the incorporeal in section 12 forms the link between incorporeal place, discussed in 1–12, and incorporeal divinity, in 12–17; Ferguson (Scott IVF, 364) writes that "the transition from a physical conception of surrounding Space to the religious one of an encompassing Deity is not great"; below, *C.H.* VIII, Title; IX. 1.

II.13 ***not from … are not:*** The form of the negative is Scott's emendation, adopted in NF I, 37.
come to be anything: an article (*to*) is editorially omitted here; NF I, 37.

II.14 ***what … never exists:*** The passage is marked corrupt and explained as a gloss; NF I, 37, 40, n. 19.
mind's being: "Mind" (*noun*) is a scribal and editorial insertion; NF I, 37.

two names: Festugière (NF I, 40–1, n. 20) believes that the two names are "the good," discussed in sections 14–16, and "father," discussed in section 17, but cf. Scott II, 106–7, and, for other Hermetic discussions of divine names, see: *C.H.* V.l, 10; *Asclep*. 20; *S.H.* VI.19.

II.15 ***substance:*** Festugière again (above, sections 10–11) has *réalité* for *huparxis*.

II.16 ***become so … inalienable:*** The translation follows the division of the words *genesthai* ("become") and *anallotriōtaton* ("inalienable") proposed by Einarson and accepted by Nock; NF I, 38.

name "good" as an honor: NF I, 38–39, has "God" rather than "good," but elsewhere (FR IV, 63) Festugière proposes emending *theou* (god) to *agathou* (good); see also *PGM* III.590–5 (Betz, p. 33); Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 150–1, 155–6.

receives nothing: Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, p. 39, interprets this as referring to the Hermetic distaste for material sacrifice: *C.H.* I.31, V. 10, VI.1; *Asclep*. 41.

***god is ⟨the⟩ good*:** Scott inserts the definite article; NF I, 39.

II.17 ***capable of making*:** Above, note on *C.H.* I. 9.

man's nature … the sun: For *andros … phusin* see above, *C.H.* I.12, on *anēr* and *anthrōpos*. Festugière (*HMP*, pp. 113–20; cf. FR I, 213) argues that the childlessness (*ateknia*) here must be willful and not merely biological because it is punished by demons, not by the stars that control physical begetting. The punishment has two aspects: first, return to a body neither male nor female, i.e., a eunuch's body; second, being "accursed under the sun," because the sun is preeminently the giver of the life prevented by childlessness. Festugière cites *PGM* XIII. 162–212 (Betz, 176–8) to show how the creator laughs joyously at the seven stages of creation, and *PGM* LXI.39–72 (Betz, 291–2) to show that the sun hates the lizard because the lizard's magic unsexes its victim. To this "Egyptian" material he adds Jewish prohibitions from Deut. 22:5, 23:1, 17–18; Lev. 18:22, 20:13; and other sources. Zielinski (1905), pp. 340–1, interprets section 17 as Peripatetic polemic against anti-materialist Platonic asceticism. See also: Scott II, 109–10; NF I, 41, nn. 28–9, 117–18, n. 9; *C.H.* X.2–3; Mahé (1975a), pp. 132–3.

to you: NF IV, 150, n. 5, corrects the omission in NF I, 39, of *soi* ("to you") in this sentence.

introduction: Fowden (*EH*, p. 100, n. 21) translates *prognōsia* as "preliminary knowledge" of the sort to be expected in the "general" and introductory treatises of the *Hermetica;* below, note on *C.H.* X. 1. Gnostics treated Prognosis as an Aeon or hypostasis: Layton, *GS*, pp. 31–3, 106, 166–7.

III
A sacred discourse of Hermes

III.1–4 See NF I, 43, and Scott II, 110 for the obscurity of this very corrupt and overwritten treatise. Nock thinks it possibly older than most of the Corpus and strongly influenced by the Septuagint; Scott dates it probably later than the second century CE and provides a table of correspondences with Gen. 1:1–28. Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 210–34, devotes a whole chapter to biblical parallels and describes the "Sacred Discourse" as "complete in itself … and not a fragment of a larger work. It is … written to show that the Stoic account of the universe is not incompatible with belief in God…. [But] there is no transcendent God, no archetypal universe, and the immortality of man, which is the dominant religious interest of the *Poimandres*, is here emphatically denied." FR II, 9–10, calls *C.H.* III "a prose hymn on cosmogony … beginning with a doxology…. There is no trace of Gnosticism; the dominant influence is from Stoicism; the style, often so far from Greek that one may wonder if the author was Greek, offers strong analogies with the language of the Septuagint."

III. 1 ***glory of all*:** Below, note on *C.H.* X.8; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 217; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 136–7.

***the divine nature*:** Festugière, following Dodd (*Bible*, p. 214), has "the glory of all things is god and the divine, and nature is divine," but see NF I, 44, n. 1.

***God … matter*:** See Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, p. 137; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 24–5. One might also translate "God, who is also mind, nature, matter, is

the beginning."

***beginning of all things*:** For the two occurences of *archē* in this paragraph, Festugière has "principe"; NF I, 44, n. 2; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 217–20, cites LXX Gen. 1:1; Prov. 8:22; Rev. 22:13 and other biblical texts.

***fine intelligent spirit*:** Above, notes on "descended" and "spirit" in *C.H.* I.4–5; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 220, cites Wisdom 7:22–3.

sent forth: Dodd (*Bible*, pp. 214, 220) translates *aneithē* as "sprang into being" or "emerged," where Festugière (NF I, 44) has "s'élança"; cf. *TDNT* I, 367.

and elements… essence: In the middle of this phrase, NF I, 43, 45, n. 3, obelizes the words *huph' hammō* ("by sand"), reading them as a gloss by someone who knew the role of sand in Egyptian cosmogony, on which see Doresse (1972b), pp. 448–9; see also below, section 2.

divide the parts: This is Festugière's conjecture (NF I, 44–5, n. 4), replacing *katadierōsi* with *katadiairousin* and adding *ta tēs* after it; cf. the first line of section 3.

III.2 ***unformed*:** *akataskeuastōn*, as in Gen. 1:2; for this and other resemblances to biblical language, see Scott II, 110–17; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 139–41; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 220–2; NF I, 45, n. 4a.

carried by spirit … carried … by divine spirit: For "carried" NF I, 44, has *véhiculé*, which nicely renders the resonance of *ocheisthai* and *ochoumenon*. These words recall the *ochēma* ("chariot") or vehicle of the soul, a theory of the soul's astral origins and its junction with matter elaborated in its greatest complexity by the Neoplatonists from a few passages in Plato, especially *Phaedo* 113D, *Phaedrus* 247B and *Timaeus* 41 E, 44E, 69C. See: NF I, 128–9, n. 48; Dodds, *Elements*, pp. 300–9, 313–21; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 178–84; Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologumena* p. 311; cf. *C.H.* X.13, XVI.7. Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 223–4, notes that "the frank polytheism is out of harmony with the spirit of Gen. 1; but we may recall that Jewish thinkers found in it a place for secondary creators … [as in] the *Secrets of Enoch* 29.3…. The astral gods here correspond to the *dioikētai* [governors] of the *Poimandres* ... but of the elaborate scheme of the *Poimandres* nothing else reappears in the *Sacred Discourse*."

⟨this lighter substance⟩: Where Nock's text shows a lacuna, Festugière translates *hē anōpherēs phusis*, inserted by Dodd (NF I, 44, 46, n. 6), as "la nature d'en-haut."

⟨in⟩ the atr: Festugière translates the "in" (*en*) conjectured editorially; NF I, 45–6, n. 7.

III.3 ***each god … flowering plant:*** Sauneron, *Esna* p. 104, suggests a parallel with an Egyptian hymn to Khnum as creator; for parallels with Genesis, see Dodd, *Bible* ***y*** pp. 225–6; *C.H.* I.11.

{*within … sowed*}: *heautois espermologoun* is obelized in Nock's text; rather than make it part of the phrase that begins after "flowering plant," Dodd breaks the phrase after *heautois* ("within them"), suspecting the influence of Hebrew syntax. *Espermologoun* ("pick up seeds") makes little sense, so Reitzenstein suggests *espermoboloun* ("emit semen" or "sow seed"); NF I, 45–6, n. 8.

humans … mankind: Above, *C.H.* I.12, on *anthrōpos*.

works … multiplying: Above, *C.H.* I.18; J. Kroll, *Lehren* pp. 140–1; Scott II, 128–9; Dodd, *Bible* pp. 227–30; NF I, 46–7, nn. 9–10.

And … incarnate: At this point, Festugière (NF I, 46, n. 11) says that "the text, here and further on [through the end of paragraph 3], is too corrupt to justify any attempt at translation." However, Reitzenstein had proposed "wonder-working" (*teratourgias*) and then the addition of *ektisan* ("created").

to examine: NF I, 45, marks *sēmeia agathōn* ("signs of good things") unintelligible; Scott I, 148–90, II, 124, suggested *sēmeiōsin* ("marking"), but the same word in later medical usage gives "examination"; cf. LSJ s.v. *sēmeiōsis*.

whirling changes: NF I, 45, obelizes *moirēs ochloumenēs* ("troubled doom"?); Nock and Ferguson (Scott IV, 366) conjecture ***amoibas kukloumenaSy*** whence "whirling changes"; cf. Scott II, 129–30.

III.4 ***the virtuous life:*** The word "virtuous" is not in the Greek, which has only *biōsai*; NF I, 45, 46, n. 12, has "la vie humaine." Fowden (*EH*, p. 103; cf. NF I, 45–6, n. 9) interprets this paragraph as an unusually strong instance of the "monist" impulse in the *Hermetica* in that it "envisages man's whole development and fulfillment in terms of his earthly life."

However, with all due respect for the obscurity of this discourse, it seems possible to read paragraph 4 as disparaging earthly monuments for their impermanence; see Scott II, 131.

for what will remain of them: Cf. *C.H.* I.24–5, "in releasing … what remains."

{*In the fame … of industry*}: This doubtful translation of a passage that Nock marks unintelligible adopts Cumont's emendation (NF I, 46, n. 13) of *pasan genesin* to *pasēs geneseōs* ("every birth") and would also require *amaurōthēsontai* ("will become dim") for *amaurōsin* ("will make dim"). For another rendering with different punctuation, see Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 213–15, 230–2, citing LXX Gen. 3:19, 9:11, 11:4; Ezek. 46:16, 47:14; Lam. 4:1; Wisd. 4:12; Ecclus. 40:1, 11, 44:8–9; *Secrets of Enoch* 32.1.

measured cycle: Scott I, 145, gives "measured" for *enanthmiou*; NF I, 46, has "cercle … que règle le nombre," as in Nock (1947), p. 645.

combination … influence: For the astrological sense of *sunkrasis* ("combination"), see NF III, 88–9, n. 10; Scott III, 458–60.

IV
A discourse of Hermes to Tat: The mixing bowl or the monad

Title ***Mixing bowl … monad:*** Instead of "mixing bowl," Scott II, 141, prefers "basin," but the Demiurge uses a *kratēr* to *mix* the world-soul in *Timaeus* 41D; cf. *Philebus* 61B; commenting on the former passage, Proclus interpreted the latter in Orphic terms; there were two Orphic poems entitled "Krater" and "Lesser Krater"; West, *Orphic Poems*, pp. 10–13, 262. NF I, 49, transliterates *kratēr* as "cratère." For the use of the bowl, see below, paragraph 4, and for the monad, paragraphs 10–11. Zosimus mentioned *C.H.* I and IV in his *Final Accounting* (Scott IV, 110–11, 142; FR I, 263, 281, 368), referring explicitly to "baptism in the mixing bowl" (*baptistheisa tō kratēri*), and elsewhere he described an altar shaped like a bowl; Scott IV, 112–14; Nilsson (1958), pp. 53–6; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 120–5; below, note on section 7. For "Monad" as a Hermetic title associated with Moses, see below, section 10; above, *C.H.*

I.3; Mussies (1982), p. 94; Gager, *Moses*, pp. 147–8. Stobaeus reproduces sections of *C.H.* IV. 1, 10–11.

IV.1 ***one and only*:** NF I, 49, n. 1, points out that the usual language of this formula is *heis kai monos* (here, *henos monou*) and mentions related passages: *C.H.* IV.5, 8; X.14; XI.5, 11; *Asclep.* 30; *S.H.* IIA.15. FR IV, 18–21 (cf. Scott I VF, 367–8) reports similar language in Philo but, ruling out Philo as a source for the *Hermetica*, concludes that the formula was Neopythagorean in origin. Ponsing (1980), pp. 29–34, however, argues for a native Egyptian source, citing *PGM* XIII. 255–9 (Betz, 179–80), *NHC* 1.5.1.51.1–25, and a number of older texts reaching back to the XlXth dynasty (thirteenth century BCE) to demonstrate that the language and the idea behind it were long known in Egypt. Particularly memorable in the Hermetic context is a tomb text from the third century BCE that praises the twice-great Thoth as One and Only. Ponsing concludes that the formula refers to God as the creator who exists, alone and unique, before anything else; see also Mahé, *Hermès* II, 291.

***this is his body* :** *C.H.* XIV.7 confirms that God's body is the very act of making; NF I, 49, n. 2; cf. Scott II, 136–7.

1–2 ***⟨not⟩ for himself … reason and mind*:** The word "not" (*ou*) is Zielinski's insertion, adopted in NF I, 49. Also, "adorn," "adornment" and "cosmos" translate the cognate words *kosmos* and *kosmeō* poorly, since the pun (explained in *Asele* p. 10; cf. *TDNT* III, 867–80) disappears. The verb *kosmeō* means "to put in order" and "to adorn"; thus, the noun *kosmos* can be "something ordered" or "order" itself, always implying the beauty inherent in order. Eventually, the prevailing sense of *kosmos* came to be the philosophical notion of an ordered totality, a world, a universe, again implying a universal beauty. There were also particular *kosmoi:* physical *kosmoi* such as the planets and stars and the spheres that carry them; or the *noētos* ("intelligible") *kosmos* distinguished by Plotinus from the *aisthētos* ("sensible") *kosmos*; or the succession of *kosmoi* in the Stoic scheme of eternal recurrence. All these conceptions and more color the Hermetic use of *kosmos* and its cognates, which occur 122 times in the Greek treatises. The significance of this idea in the *Hermetica* can be gauged from the title that Festugière chose for the second and largest volume of his *Révélation: Le Dieu cosmique*. In order to preserve the

complex resonance of the word, I have rendered *kosmos* almost always as "cosmos," though "world" or "universe" would often serve as well. For "the man" see above, note on *C.H.* I.12; the second occurrence of "the man" here is Scott's insertion, and "ever-living" represents Nock's emendation of *tou zōou* to *to aeizōon*. NF I, 49, translates *anthrōpos* in all three cases as "l'homme" without capitalization. See also: Scott II, 138,1 VF, 366–7; NF I, 49, n. 3; FR I, 93–4; *C.H.* V.5, IX.8, XI.2, XII.21; *Asclep.* 10; *S.H.* XXIX.

IV. 2 ***spectator of god's work*:** Compare *C.H.* XIV.3–4; *A.D.* 8.5; Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 88–9; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 387.

IV. 3 ***all people … of people:*** The word "people" here represents *anthrōpos*, but see above, section 2, as well as *C.H.* I.12.

Tat: This name, which occurs twenty times in the Greek treatises (*C.H.* IV, V, X, XII, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVII) and four times in the *Asclepius*, is a form of Thoth, but, according to the traditions reported by pseudo-Manetho and Augustine (Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 139, nn. 2–3; below, *C.H.* X.23) the character Tat is the son of Trismegistus, the second Hermes, who is the son of Agathodaimon, who is the son of Thoth, the first Hermes; see also *C.H.* I.Title; *Asclep.* 37; FR I, 75.

not mind: Festugière (NF I, 53, nn. 6–7) distinguishes between mind (*nous*) and reason (*logos*) as between intuition and ratiocination; only the former, a special gift from God, leads to saving knowledge (*gnōsis);* the latter, shared by all men, implies both discursive reasoning and the expression of reasoning in speech. See also: above, note on *C.H.* I.1; below, section 4; Zielinski (1905), pp. 342–3; Bousset (1914), pp. 125–32; *Kyrios*, pp. 184–6; Festugière, *HMP*, pp. 58–60, who contrasts this passage with *C.H.* I.22–3 and XII.3–4, where all people have at least the capability of expressing mind; and Ferguson (Scott IVF, 367), who makes the opposition between *nous* and *logos* parallel to the difference between the *pneumatikoi* and the *psuchikoi*, citing Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 65–89; on this last point, see also below, section 4, on "perfect people" and "reason," as well as the note on "spirit" for *C.H.* I.5. Daumas (1982), pp. 11–13, cites an Egyptian text of the XVIIIth or XlXth dynasty that distinguishes "perfect" from "common" people in a way that he finds relevant to this passage.

to none … comes: NF I, 50, accepts the punctuation and word order of Turnebus.

IV. 4 ***herald … proclamation:*** The message that a herald (*kērux*) proclaims (*kērussō*) is called a *kērugma*; New Testament authors also used these words to refer to preaching and prophecy; Arndt and Gingrich; s.vv. *kērugma, kērux*, *kērussō*; *TDNT* III, 696, 703, 714–17; cf. *C.H.* I.27. Fowden (*EH*, p. 149) sees the presence of the herald in this treatise as one of the rare Hermetic allusions to the language of the mystery religions. Festugière (NF I, 54, n. 11) refers to the herald and proclamation in *The Hymn of the Pearl* 37 (Layton, *GS*, 372); cf. Mahé, *Hermès* II, 303.

***Immerse yourself in the mixing bowl* :** "Immerse" translates *baptison* ; in *TDNT*, I, 532–4, A. Oepke explains that "while *baptizein, baptizesthai* are occasionally found in a religious … context in Hellenism, they do not acquire a technically sacral sense." However, his account of the importance in Egyptian religion of washing – and drowning – in the Nile is worth noting; see also "the inexorable water of the god Hermes who protects" in a letter of the fourth century CE written by a devotee of Hermes Trismegistus, probably at Hermopolis: Rees, *Hermopolis*, pp. 2–4; also Festugière (1951b), p. 485. Baptism was important to various Gnostic groups: Layton, *GS*, pp. 63–4, 94, 99, 117, 127–8, 136, 179, 345, 348.

At the end of the *Final Accounting*, a work of alchemical and spiritual advice addressed to Theosebeia, Zosimus urges her to "rush to Poimandres and, having been baptized in the krater, rise up to your race": FR I, 281, 368; Scott IV, 111, 142; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 214–15; below, section 7. A *kratēr* is a vessel for mixing wine and water, and *kratērizō* can mean the mixing or pouring of wine to be used in an initiation or sacrifice. Although Festugière (*HMP*, pp. 100–12; NF I, 53–4, nn. 9–12) cites an example of connection (as opposed to fusion) between a *krētērismos* and a ceremonial bath (*loutron*), he claims that the two rites (one eucharistie, the other baptismal) were always kept distinct. He cites LXX Prov. 9:1–6 for those who "leave folly … seek wisdom, and improve understanding by knowledge (*en gnōsei),"* in a context where Wisdom has "mingled her wine in a bowl (*kratēra),"* and he recalls the Gnostic formulae of "drinking knowledge" and "mystic drunkenness." However, on the basis of a fragment of Valentinian Gnostic material that

links a ceremonial bath (*loutron*) with *gnōsis*, Festugière (Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotos* 78.1; cf. Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.7.19; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, p. 41; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 373–4; Bousset [1914], pp. 186–7; J.-E. Ménard [1977], p. 160) concludes that the purpose of "plunging" (*baptizesthai*) must have been cleansing rather than drinking. To account for the baptism in a mixing bowl, he refers to *Pistis Sophia* 4.142 and the *Second Book of Jeû* 45, in which Jesus miraculously turns a crater of wine into "the water of the baptism of life" and baptizes the disciples with it. On this account, *C.H.* IV presents "a blending of two rites: one is an absorption of a sacred drink taken from the crater; the other is a bath of purification and initiation"; in this connection, see also: *C.H.* I.22; IX.5; X.23; Scott II, 140–3.

"Yourself" is feminine referring either to "human hearts" (*tais tōn anthrōpōn kardiais*) in the previous sentence, or possibly to "soul"; in the latter case, one might translate "if you have the strength, if you believe … if you recognize." Plato and other Greek thinkers sometimes located the soul in the *kardia*, but biblical usage is more emphatic in treating the heart as the center of mankind's inner life; below, section 11; Nilsson (1958), pp. 57–8; *TDNT* III, 606–13; Scott II, 143. For "heart" in Egyptian usage, see Mahé, *Hermès* II, 297–8.

***perfect people*:** For "perfect" (*teleioi*) as a Gnostic term for the initiated, see Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.8.29–30, 16.10; Scott IVF, 367; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 149–50, 432; above, note on "not mind" in section 3.

***But those … reason*:** See above, section 3, for "people of reason"; see also Festugière, *HMP*, p. 101, n. 5; *Religion*, pp. 132–3; FR III, 108, n. 2; note, however, that *logos* and its derivatives can also be positive terms in Hermetic and related literature, signifying the higher "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*) as opposed to the lower "psychic" (*psuchikos*) life; *TDNT* IV, 142–3; IX, 478–9, 656–8, 662–3. NF I, 50, reads *houtoi* ("those") with Scott for *autoi* and suggests that the *logikos* is to be compared with Paul's view of the *psuchikos*, e.g., in I Cor. 15: 44–9.

***receive … as well*:** This phrase renders the verb *proslambanō*, "to take in addition," "to get over and above" (LSJ s.v. *proslambanō* 1.1), which Festugière translates as "acquérir en surplus"; "the gift of" is not in the Greek at this point, but see below, section 5.

purpose … to be: Puech (1934–5), pp. 165–6 (cf. Puech [1953–6], p. 195; [1952], pp. 257–8), compares this definition of the Gnostic to

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.21.5, and Clement, *Excerpts from Theodotos* 78.2 (trans. D. Hill in Foerster, *Gnosis*, I, p. 230): "the knowledge: who were we? what have we become? where were we? into what place have we been cast? whither are we hastening? from what are we delivered? what is birth? what is rebirth?"

IV. 5 ***unreasoning animals*:** *C.H.* IX. 1.

***no awe … admired*:** A second "not" after "feel … awe" has been omitted editorially and in some manuscripts; NF I, 50.

***the gift … god* :** Commenting on "the gift of the Ogdoad" in *NHC* VI. 6.55.13–18, Mahé, *Hermès* I, 100–1, refers to this passage and to *C.H.* X.9, XIII.2 and other texts that emphasize the freedom of God's giving.

***comprehended … >raised*:** Below, *C.H.* X.25, "human rises."

***they have seen … one and only*:** Below, *C.H.* IX.6, XIII. 1.

IV. 6 **{*resolve perplexities*}:** Festugière (NF I, 51, 55, n. 16) accepts Scott's substitution of *euporia* for *entoria*, which Nock marks unintelligible, but he translates it as "possession en abondance" (LSJ s.v. *euporia* I. 2), while Scott (I, p. 153, II, 144–5) has "throws open," which is closer to another sense of *euporia* (LSJ s.v. II), "solution of doubts or difficulties," as opposed to *aporia* (for which see *C.H.* XI. 16, XIII.2, XIV.5).

***hate your body*:** From section 5, above, through 7, below, the writer vehemently expresses an ascetic contempt for the body; above, *C.H.* I. 19; cf. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 1.1: "The philosopher Plotinus, as he lived among us, seemed ashamed that he was in the body"; Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 44–5.

{*have both … choose*}: Nock obelizes this phrase, and suggests that all but the first word ("both," *amphotera*) may be a corrupt addition; he also proposes adding *ham*' *echein* ("have together") before or after "both"; Festugière has "là, où il ne reste que de choisir"; NF I, 51, 55, n. 17a. After considerable rewriting, Scott (I, 152–3, II, 145–6) gives "It is not possible to take both."

IV. 7 ***Choosing the stronger:*** A superfluous word (*energeia*) in this phrase has been removed editorially by Patrizi and in NF I, 51.

***in that … a god*:** NF I, 51, following Einarson, inserts an article (*tō*) in this phrase before *ton anthrōpon* ("the human"), on which see above, *C.H.* I.12.

***processions … led astray*:** Though he cites passages from Marcus Aurelius (7.3) and the *Dissertations* (4.1.104) of Epictetus where "parades" might be the sense of *pompai* and its cognates, Scott II, 147–8, thinks that a religious procession is meant, and Nock ([1925], pp. 27–30; [1937], p. 463; Scott I VF, 368) suggests that the *pompai* are actually images carried by worshippers or else people representing gods; see also: Festugière, *Vie spirituelle*, pp. 51–7; Fraser, *Alexandria*, I, p. 202; Cumont, *Egypte*, pp. 126–7. As Nock and Scott point out, the problem is that a religious ceremony seems here to be treated with disdain; see below, *C.H.* XII.23; *Asclep*. 41. In any event, Zosimus borrows this image in *On apparatus:* Scott IV, 105, 116; FR I, 265–6; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 102; NF I, 55, n. 18; above, note on title. Fowden (*EH*, pp. 123–4; Jackson, *Zosimos*, pp. 20–1, 43) infers from Zosimus' reference to the Hermetic book containing the parade image as *Peri phuseōn* that an alternate title for *C.H.* IV is *On natural dispositions*, and from the passage discussed above (section 4) from the *Final Accounting*, he concludes that the "technical alchemical Hermética offer a *propaideia* to the spiritual doctrines" of the philosophical *Hermetica*. NF I, 52, follows Patrizi in reading *paragomenoi* ("led astray") for *paragenomenoi* ("supported") in the manuscripts, and "parading" (*pompeuousin*) could well be rendered "putting on a procession in" to echo the cognate *pompai*.

IV. 8 ***we are responsible … god's:*** NF I, 55, n. 19, and Cumont, *Lux*, pp. 417–18, note the resemblance to Plato, *Republic* 379B-C; *Timaeus* 42D; see also *Republic* 617–21 and *Asclep*. 39. Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 43, 49, refers to the Egyptian Coffin Texts.

how many bodies: Scott II, 148–9, and NF I, 55–6, nn. 20, 22, agree that this is not a reference to the migration of souls; the bodies (*sōmata*) are the spheres through which the soul must pass in rising through the cosmos – the four elements, the planetary spheres, the fixed stars; Ferguson (Scott IV, 368), however, understands *sōmata* to mean the various coverings (as in *C.H.* I.24–6; X.15–18; XII.12–14; XIII.7–12) that the soul sheds as it voyages home; see also *TDNT* VII, 1037–8, 1043–4; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 99; Festugière, *Religion*, p. 135.

***⟨cosmic⟩ connections*:** Literally, "continuity" (*sunecheian*), but Festugière (NF I, 55–6, n. 21) indicates that the word refers here to "the absolute continuity that exists … among the seven concentric spheres, from the circle of Saturn … to that of the moon … [and also] among the four parts of sublunary nature."

untraversable: The manuscripts have *diabaton* ("passable, fordable"), which NF I, 52, emends to *adiabaton*, following Patrizi; see also FR IV, 74, for "inaccessible" as against "infranchissable" in NF.

***it is also*:** Reading *auto* ("it") for *autō* with FR IV, 74, another change from NF I, 52.

IV. 9 ***neither … outline*:** Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 58–60; Dodd, *Bible*, p. 236.

IV. 10 ***The monad:*** Whether or not Scott (II, 151; cf. NF I, 53) is right in detecting a gap in the text between "the like" and "the monad," there is no doubt that these words introduce a new topic, mentioned in the title (above, note on title). Plato, influenced by the Pythagoreans, developed a doctrine of becoming that began with the One (*hen*) and the Indefinite Dyad as opposed principles. The One, which is good, active, proportionate and harmonious, imposes limit on the limitless, formless Dyad, and this generates the numbers from two onward. Then, from numbers come points, lines, surfaces, solids, elements, ultimately all the ingredients of the cosmos. Such later thinkers as Philo of Alexandria and the Neopythagorean Nicomachus of Gerasa elaborated the doctrine. Nicomachus, for example, equated the Monad with God. Scott II, 151, cites a particularly relevant passage (4.43) of Hippolytus on "Egyptians [who] … said that god is an indivisible monad, that it begot itself and that all things were built up from it." The title "monad" appears at the beginning of *PGM* XIII; above, *C.H.* I.4, note on "light." See also: Dillon, *Middle Platonism*, pp. 3–4, 155–6, 342, 355; Guthrie, *HGP* V, 439–42; FR IV, 18–19; NF I, 56–7, n. 28; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 204–5; cf. *C.H.* XII.15, XIII.12, and for monads and unities in Gnosticism, see Layton, *GS*, pp. 29, 154–5, 314.

IV. 11 ***eyes of your heart*:** Above, remarks on "heart" in section 4; below, *C.H.* V.2, VII.1, X.4 and *Asclep.* 29, with note on the *Chaldaean Oracles*.

***road … above*:** Above, *C.H.* I.26–7, on *hodēgos* ("guide").

***the magnet*:** For this simile Scott cites Plato's *Ion* 533D and Porphyry *On Abstinence* 4.20, noting also that "takes hold" (*katechei*) comes from a verb that refers to possession by a supernatural being, as above in *C.H.* I.1. Ferguson (Scott IVF, 369) refers to Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.17.9, 21.8–9.

V

A discourse of Hermes to Tat, his son: That god is invisible and entirely visible

V.1 ***I shall also deliver … mysteries*:** For the relationship of the verb (*diexeleusomai*) to the treatises called *diexodikoi logoi*, see Scott II, 157; FR II, 39–40; *C.H.* X.l, XIV. 1; *Asclep.* 1; see also *C.H.* I.32 on *paradosis*; IX. 1; *S.H.* XI. 1, 3; XXV.4; Plato, *Laws* 892E-93A; *Theaetetus* 189E. The phrase "uninitiated in the mysteries" translates *amuētos*, on which see above, *C.H.* I.16.

invisible … visible: NF I, 60, renders these words (*aphanēs*, *phaneros*) as "inapparent" and "apparent" throughout. For Egyptian, Platonic and Gnostic versions of the hidden god, see Scott II, 158, and for parallels to Papyrus Insinger here and below in sections 3, 5 and 9, see Mahé, *Hermès* II, 304.

***if it … ⟨always⟩ be*:** The first "not" (*mē*) and the "always" (*aei*) are editorial additions by Tiedemann and Einarson; NF I, 60.

***what ⟨begets⟩ … ⟨is not⟩ present*:** NF I, 60, inserts "begets" (*genna*) and "is not" (*ouk esti*), following Einarson.

presents images … imagination: The verb here is *phantasioō* ("present images to"), the noun *phantasia*, according to Scott II, 159–60, "a technical term of the Aristotelian and Stoic theory of cognition [that] … signifies the mental image which results from the action of an object on the bodily sense organs, or the process by which this mental image is produced. … We commonly suppose that our *phantasiai* are caused by external objects…. But in reality … [they] are caused by god …"; cf.

Peters, *Philosophical Terms*, p. 156. The word "but" (*ē*) requires the emendation suggested by Scott and adopted in NF I, 60; cf. 62, n. 2.

V. 2 ***not one … one comes:*** In Platonic philosophy the One is usually called *hen*, the neuter nominative singular of the word "one," whose masculine is *heis*. In this passage, however, the second "one" represents *heis* (as does the third word in section 2) while the first "one" represents the dative, *heni*, which might be masculine or neuter. Festugière (NF I, 62–3, n. 4; cf. Scott II, 160, I VF, 369) sees God as *hen*, the supreme source of *heis*, which could represent either mind or cosmos.

***illuminate your thinking*:** *C.H.* X.6, XIII.18, XVI.16; *Asclep.* 23; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 139–40.

the lord: Dodd, *Bible*, p. 239, noting that *kurios* ("lord") is not a divine title in classical Greek usage and alluding to *dominus* in *Asclep.* 8, 10, 20, 26, suggests that the usage of the Septuagint is closer to the sense of this passage than a phrase like *kurios Sarapis* in Egyptian papyri; see also *C.H.* I.6, XIII.17, 21; *Asclep.* 19, 21, 22, 23, 29.

god reveal his inner self: Replacing *heauton en sautō*, marked unintelligible by Nock, with Scott's conjecture, *autos en heautō*; NF I, 61, 65, n. 8; Rose (1947), p. 102, suggests *to auto en heautō*, which would change the meaning to "how will the self in itself be revealed."

V. 3 ***consider the … stars:*** Festugière (*HMP*, p. 79; FR II, 51–5; *Religion*, pp. 134–5) sees *C.H.* V.3–8 as particularly strong in the optimist current of Hermetic gnosis wherein "the sensible world leads to the intelligible," but he also notes contradictions between concep» tions of transcendent and immanent divinity that make this treatise a leading example of the eclecticism and incoherence that he finds characteristic of the *Hermetica*; cf. *C.H.* X.4; *Asclep.* 12; NF I, 65, n. 10. On the form of this passage and its relation to section 4, see Nock (1925), pp. 31–2.

V. 4 ***instrument … bear*:** The instrument may be the mill of heaven, visualized by imagining the bears as circling the pole like two mill-animals; Scott II, 161–2, IVF, 361–2, 370; cf. *C.H.* II.7; *S.H.* VI.13; Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologumena*, p. 311.

***who set limits*:** NF I, 65–6, n. 13, compares the questioning to *PGM* XII. 245–8 (Betz, 163) and to classical Greek sources; below, note on sections

6–7, for biblical parallels.

***⟨has been … only⟩*:** These words (*poiētē monē de hē*) are supplied editorially in NF I, 62, following Scott.

***{deficient that … of order}*:** NF I, 62, marks this phrase unintelligible; a manuscript correction substitutes "that not" (*hoti ou*) for "which" (*hote*). According to Ferguson (Scott IVF, 370; NF I, 66, n. 15), matter is the unordered and deficient.

order on it: For "it" NF I, 62, has "l'absence de lieu et d'ordre" because the feminine pronoun (*autē*) in the text should correspond to the feminine nouns (*atopia* and *ametría*, "something placeless and measureless") above.

V. 5 ***wings … up*:** NF I, 66, n. 16, mentions the locus classicus for this lofty vision of the cosmos, the "Dream of Scipio" in Cicero, *On the Republic* 6.9–26, as well as *C.H.* XI.6–7 and the so-called "Mithras Liturgy" in the Great Magical Papyrus of Paris (*PGM* IV.437–584 [Betz, 48–9]); Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 26–7.

***on … points*:** Festugière gives "son circuit autour des mêmes points," but Nock explains that *tauta*, the pronoun form from Tiedemann's emendation, refers to the points at the ends of an axis; NF I, 62, 66, n. 17.

***order … order*:** See above, note on sections 1–2.

V. 6 ***to see the vision:*** For *theasasthai* Festugière has "contempler Dieu"; NF I, 62, 66–7, n. 18a.

godlike image: Above, *C.H.* I.12; below, XVI.Title, referring to LXX Gen. 1:26.

V.6–7 ***Who traced… sort of father*:** FR I, 296–8, refers to *PGM* XII. 245–50 (Betz, p. 163). Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 237–9, cites LXX Is. 40:12; Job 34:13, 38:4–38; Prov. 24:27. Mahé (*Hermès* II, 293–5, 379; [1975a], pp. 143–4) notes the resemblance of this material to an Egyptian *Hymn to Khnum*\ Khnum is a counterpart of the Hermetic Agathodaimon. Cf. *NHC* VI.7.64.1–20; below, note on *C.H.* X.23.

V. 6 ***joined the {ribs}*:** "Sinews" (*neura*) is obelized; NF I, 63 has "nerfs"; "ribs" (*pleura*) was suggested by Foix de Candale, but cf. Scott II, 164,

IVF, 371.

V. 8 ***statue:*** The Greek is *andrianta*, which can be a human statue of either gender, though not usually a statue of a god; LSJ s.v. *andrias*.
***craftsman…. Or rather*:** NF I, 63, indicates a lacuna here, following Scott, between "craftworks" (*dēmiourgēmata*) and *mallon* ("rather").
***{than a name used of god}*:** Marked unintelligible in NF I, 63; my translation accepts Festugière's substitution (67, n. 22) for *hosē kata theon onomatos* of *ē kata theou onoma*; see above, *C.H.* V.l.

V. 9 ***pregnant:*** See *C.H.* I.8–9, 12; *Asclep*. 20; NF I, 67, n. 23; cf. Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 367, 422; Scott II, 165, IVF, 371–2.
***also is it impossible … [not] to exist*:** NF I, 63, deletes a redundant "not" (*mē*) before "exist."
He is himself: NF I, 64, emends *autos ... autos* to *houtos … autos*.

V.10 ***greater than … no name*:** On namelessness, see above, section 1; below, *Asclep*. 20; Scott II, 165–6; West, *Orphic Poems*, p. 255; Fox, *Pagans*, pp. 169–70; and on forms and names, Junod (1982), p. 41; NF I, 64, inserts "that" (*ha*), following Foix de Candale; for the translation, *ibid*., p. 67, n. 25a.
Who … purpose: Alternative translation: "speaking about you or to you"; for the verb *eulogēsai* ("may praise"), which is the manuscript reading, see NF I, 64, 67–8, n. 28; Scott I, 165.
***give … and take*:** Above, *C.H.* II.16; below, VI.10.

V. 11 ***a hymn*:** Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 181, arranges this section in hymn form.
wherefore: This translates *dia ti*, for which Festugière (NF I, 64, 68, n. 32) gives "en raison de quoi," "avec quoi" or "par le moyen de quoi."
***For … I am*:** NF I, 65, adopts Patrizi's substitution of *ho an* ("whatever") for *ho ean* to conform to the next two parallel clauses. Scott II, 167–8, IVF, 372, and NF I, 68–9, n. 33, call attention to a similar formula – "you are I and I am you" – in the Greek Magical Papyri (*PGM* VIII.38–40, 49–50; XIII.795 [Betz, pp. 146, 191]; Betz [1981], pp. 165–6) and to Reitzenstein's (*Poimandres*, pp. 20–1, 28142, 242–4) identification of the

same language in liturgical, alchemical and apocryphal biblical texts; see also Bousset, *Kyrios*, pp. 61, 87, 150, 165; Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 184.

mind who understands: For *nous men nooumenos* NF I, 65, 69, n. 35, has "pensée, en tant que pensant."

[*The matter … is god*]: NF I, 65, excises this sentence, following Scott II, 168, who refers it to *C.H.* XII.14.

VI
That the good is in god alone and nowhere else

VI.1 ***supplies … is good*:** Zielinski (1905), pp. 333–4, interprets sections 1–2 as declaring the "Peripatetic" principle that activity is good and passivity evil; the other half of the argument is in section 2, "where there is passion, there is no good"; below, section 4.

***belongs* [ ] *to nothing*:** The preposition "in" (*en*) has been editorially deleted in NH I, 72, following Patrizi.

***God lacks … jealous*:** NF I, 73–4, n. 3, refers to *C.H.* II.14–16, where God "gives everything and receives nothing"; to Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* 1178b8–23, where the gods' sole activity of contemplation transcends justice, courage, liberality and temperance; and to the Stoic requirement (Long, *Hellenistic*, pp. 206–7) that wisdom must be free of "all passion. Anger, anxiety, cupidity, dread, elation, these and similar extreme emotions are all absent." Scott II, 172–3, refers to *C.H.* XIII.7, and Zielinski (1905), pp. 332–3, sees this passage as well as *C.H.* VI.3 as a list of planetary vices; cf. *C.H.* V.10, IX.3; *Asclep.* 1.23, 25, 41.

have a companion: Scott II, 173, associates "companion" (*suzugon*) with the *suzugiai* of Valentinian Gnosticism; these were pairs of divine beings distinguishable as male and female (Layton, *GS*, pp. 225, 281–2). There is also a *suzugos* or "consort" in *Pistis Sophia* 1.29.31–2, 39, etc. (*TDNT* VI, 301; VII, 750). NF I, 74–5, n. 4, translates "cela non plus ne se conjoint pas" and doubts the allusion to *suzugiai*. See notes on *C.H.* LI, XIII.12.

⟨*nothing … beautiful*⟩: The whole phrase (*oute kallion*) is an editorial addition; NF I, 72.

VI.2 ***Since … to the substance*:** NF I, 73, 75, n. 5, emends *ontōn* to *ontos* to agree with *mêdenos* ("none") and points out that the substance (*ousia*) in question is the one mentioned in paragraph 1 above.

these other qualities: NF I, 73, 76, n. 6, supplies "other" (*allōn*).

the living thing itself: NF I, 76, n. 7, identifies "the living thing" (*tō zōō*) as the cosmos.

passion … passions … passion … : The words used here, *pathos* and *pathētos*, with the associated verb, *paschō*, have a wide range of meaning, beginning with the most general senses of the verb, "to have something happen to one," "to be affected." Plato and Aristotle make action (*poiein*) and passion (*paschein*) correlative aspects of becoming (*genesis*). Thus, in one sense, a *pathos* is something that happens to a body, a *physical* "attribute" or "event," but the Greeks also believed that the soul has its *pathē*, *psychological* or *moral* states such as "experiences," "emotions," "sufferings" or "affects." Festugière (NF I, 73, 76, n. 8), who translates the first occurrence of *pathōn* as "passions," does not agree with Scott (II, 175) that the word has a psychological sense here in addition to its broader reference to the process of *genesis*. Elsewhere, the *Hermetica* discuss god's freedom from *pathē* and their presence in everything else: *C.H.* XII.4–7, 10–11; XIV.8–9; *TDNT* V, 906–7. For a summary of the uses of these words in Greek philosophy, see Peters, *Terms*, pp. 151–5, and for their most extensive treatment in the *Hermetica*, see *C.H.* XII.4–7, 10–11.

***night … day*:** Beginning here, Didymus of Alexandria, who died *c.* 398 CE, quotes from *C.H.* VI.2–3 in *On the Trinity* 2.3; Scott IV, 168- 70; NF I, 73.

***⟨thus,⟩ … not good*:** NF I, 73, following Foix de Candale, inserts *hōs* ("thus"). For other views on the moral status of the cosmos, see: below, section 4; *C.H.* IX.4, X. 10–12; *Asclep.* 6–7, 10–11, 25–7; Scott II, 175–6; NF I, 76, n. 10; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 152–4; Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 16–17.

VI. 3 ***one uses … "evil"*:** Festugière translates "le bien se mesure en lui par comparaison avec le mal," but see the alternative translation in NF I, 73, 75–6, n. 11, where the word order and form of *to agathon tou kakou* are editorial changes.

least amount of evil: Cf. *A.D.* 10.4; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 399.

***Material body … no room*:** Above, *C.H.* I.18–19.

each of the things: NF I, 76, n. 15, agrees with Scott II, 177, that this vague phrase refers not to the pains and delusions just mentioned but to "the things which the *pathê* impel men to seek"; cf. *C.H.* VI.6, *S.H.* XI.5.

***Gluttony … below*:** The sentence about gluttony may be a gloss, perhaps alluding to Egyptian ceremonies of mummification that treated the stomach literally as a container of sins; otherwise, NF I, 74, 76, n. 16, posits a lacuna between this sentence and the next; cf. Scott II, 177. For gluttony and the other vices, see above, *C.H.* VI. 1; Scott IVF, 373.

VI. 4 ***plenitude of vice*:** "Plenitude" (*plērōma*) was another technical term in Gnosticism; Valentinus, for example, applied it to the upper spiritual cosmos with its full set of higher beings (thirty Aeons). The mythological sense of the term is not apparent in the *Hermetica*, where the word indicates a "fullness" or "totality" of good, evil and so on. New Testament authors also used the word in various technical senses, e.g., in relation to Christ's headship of the body of the church (Eph. 1:23; Col. 1:18–20) or his relationship to the *plērōma* of God (Eph. 3:17–19), which Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 25–6, relates to *PGM* IV. 970–5 (Betz, p. 57); Philo, *On Rewards and Punishments* 2.11; and *C.H.* VI.4, IX.7, XII.15, XVI.3, as well as this passage. See also: Scott II, 177; NF I, 76–77, n. 17; Arndt and Gingrich s.v. *plērōma*; Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*, pp. 179–94; Wilson (1967), pp. 518–20; Layton, *GS*, pp. 226, 249, 282–3, 294–5; *C.H.* I.26; *Asclep.* 33; *NHC* VI. 8.74.20–5; Mahé, *Hermès* II, p. 361. Fowden (*EH*, p. 102; cf. Mahé, *Hermès* II, p. 420; Festugière, *HMP*, p. 69; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 149; Puech [1953–6], pp. 202–3) notes that the pessimist dualism expressed in this passage is at one extreme of Hermetic opinion, contradicted by *C.H.* IX.4; Zielinski (1905), pp. 330–4, identified the position of *C.H.* VI as Peripatetic, contrasting it to a Platonic view that evil arises from lower matter rather than the cosmos itself; see also *C.H.* I.9, VL2; VII.3; X.15; XIV.7; *Asclep.* 15.

***good of god … god's essence*:** NF I, 77, n. 18 (cf. p. 74) translates Nock's conjecture *ex gar hai* ("If indeed") for *hai gar* in the text and makes "essence" (*ousian*) the end of a clause, not a sentence; *autou* ("god's," literally "his") requires the emendation of *autēn*. Following Scott's identification of a lacuna between "of god" and "If indeed," Nock (p. 77,

n. 18) fills it conjecturally with "where the good is, the beautiful is also." See below, *C.H.* XII. 1; *A.D.* 10.4; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 399.

which are part of him: NF I, 74, following W. Kroll, replaces *hautai hai* in the manuscripts with *autai hai* ("those … which"), and translates *kai autai hai ousai ekeinou* as "celles qui constituent Dieu lui-même."

***not … detected in any*:** NF I, 75, emends *ouden* to *en oudeni*.

phantoms … illusions: Zielinski (1905), p. 334, interprets this phrase as the intrusion of Platonic dualism into an otherwise Peripatetic treatise; above, note on "plenitude."

***especially the ⟨essence⟩ … As*:** "Essence" is Festugière's guess (NF I, 75), following Tiedemann, for a reference unspecified in the Greek; this reading fills part of the lacuna after "good" (*agathou*) with *ousia*.

VI.5 ***exceedingly … surpasses*:** Festugière (NF I, 75) has "le souverainement lumineux, le souverainement illuminé" for *to huper-lampron to huperlampomenon*, but see p. 77, n. 19, for Nock's suggestion of "outshone" for *huperlampomenon* and the reading *huperlampon* from MS A; cf. Scott II, 179, IVF, 373; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 134–5.

***nothing in common … things*:** NF I, 75, following Patrizi, deletes a repetition of "other" (*allōn*) in this phrase and translates *akoinônēta* as "incommunicables," but in n. 20, p. 77, Festugière suggests "n'ont point de rapport" as an alternative.

***Only one road*:** See: *C.H.* IX.4, X.8–9; Festugière, *HMP*, p. 96; Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 96.

VI. 6 ***see … dream*:** One might take *mēde onar* idiomatically to mean simply "not at all" and, even in connection with *theasamenon*, an alternative translation would be "a human has no notion at all of what the good might be."

VII
That the greatest evil in mankind is ignorance concerning god

VII.1 ***Where … drunkenness*:** Cf. *C.H.* I.27 for the sermon which is only one of a number of parallels between treatises I and VII that may indicate common authorship; in Gnostic texts the contrast between sober knowledge and drunken ignorance is commonplace. See: Is. 28:1; Jer. 28:39, 32:1–2; NF I, 78, 81, n. 1; Dodd, *Bible*, pp. 181, 187–8; Scott II, 181–2, IVF, 373; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 63, 104, 373; Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 6; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 113–18; *Gnostic Religion*, p. 71; *TDNT* IV, 545–6; Layton, *GS*, pp. 46, 85, 256, 385, 405, 408; cf. 382.

ignorance: Dodd (*Bible*, pp. 183–7; cf. Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 120, 373-5; Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 120) lists pairs of opposed terms – darkness and light, ignorance and knowledge, error and truth, drunkenness and sobriety, destruction and deliverance – in this and other Hermetic treatises, and he associates them with Hellenistic Judaism (e.g., Wisd. 2:13, 21–4; 5:6; 6:22; 7:13–17, 26; 8:18; 9:11; 10:10; 13:1); see also: NF I, 78, 82, n. 3; *C.H.* X.8; XI.21.

***vomiting*:** Festugière (NF I, 81) has "vous allez vomir," and Nock (p. 82, n. 4; cf. Scott I, 170–1, II, 183) thinks that the sense requires *emeite* to be future. Rose (1947), p. 103, suggests a different punctuation, in accord with his view that "the exhorter … would have them first vomit it up and thus become sober, and so stop and hear him."

***eyes of the heart*:** NF I, 82, n. 5, concludes that the inspiration of this expression must be Jewish because it appears only in Scripture, citing Eph. 1:18; II Cor. 4:6; II Peter 1:19 and other texts; cf. *C.H.* IV. 11, V.2; Scott II, 183; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 169–70, 370–5.

***havens … anchor there*:** Dodd (*Bible*, pp. 188–91) sees allusions to the biblical story of the flood, which Philo (*On Dreams* 2.237; *On Special Laws* 3.6; *On Flight* 192) reads as an allegory on the soul swept up in a deluge of sin and passion; Dodd also finds precedents in the Psalms for the soul's eventual guidance to a safe haven. Despite the maritime flavor of the language, Scott (II, 184; cf. Mahé, *Hermès* II, 450) thinks that the flood is the Nile at high water, which threatens the pilgrim on his journey to a temple. Festugière (NF I, 78–9, 82, n. 6) cites Greek and Latin parallels, but Nock sees only poetic commonplaces.

VII.2 ***guide*:** Above, *C.H.* I.26–7, on *hodēgos*.

***portals … light*:** Festugière (NF I, 79), referring to Nock (1934), pp. 357–400, on the temple of Mandulis Aion, suggests that this phrase may

refer to an Egyptian shrine designed so that sunlight falls on the god's statue. Despite the importance of the god Aion in the *Hermetica* (*C.H.* XI.2; XII.8, 15; XIII.20; *Asclep*. 29–32) and despite the language of Nock's text (*ibid*., p. 366) – "rayshooting lord … sungod … [who] didst come … to thy shrine" – Nock (NF I, 80) concludes that "it is unnecessary to press the analogy with the Egyptian sanctuaries."

***rip off the tunic*:** For a different use of the tunic (*chiton*) metaphor, see *C.H.* X.18. The same treatise (X.13) also mentions the vehicle of the soul, described in the note on *C.H.* III.2, above. Dodds (*Elements*, pp. 307–8) locates the origin of "tunic" as a metaphor for the body in early Greek sources; he also explains its later elaboration by Philo, the Valentinian Gnostics, Porphyry and Proclus. He translates (p. 183) the relevant passage in Proclus (*Elements*, Prop. 209) as follows: "The vehicle (*ochēma*) of every particular soul descends by the addition of vestures (*chitōnōn*) increasingly material; and ascends in company with the soul through divestment of all that is material and recovery of its proper form. … For the soul descends by the acquisition of irrational principles of life; and ascends by putting off all those faculties tending to temporal process with which it was invested in its descent." Dodd (*Bible*, pp. 191–4) emphasizes the context of Hellenistic Judaism and traces Jewish variants of the metaphor to the "tunics of skins" given to the fallen Adam and Eve in Gen. 3:21, a text known to Valentinus. He also shows that Philo (*Allegorical Interpretation* 2.15.55–9) compared the high priest's robe to "the garment of opinions and impressions of the soul" and interpreted the tunics in Lev. 10:5 as irrational coverings for the soul's rational part. See also: NF I, 82–3, n. 9, which emphasizes the Greek sources; Dodds, *Anxiety*, pp. 94–6, for Plotinus and Philo; Layton, *GS*, pp. 98, 174, 292, 374, 387, cf. 116, 333, for the Gnostics; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 41–6, 448–50, for the mystery religions and for Iranian parallels to the imagery in this passage; also Scott II, 185–6.

***the dark cage*:** NF I, 83–4, n. 11, points out the occurrence of *peribolon* ("cage") in the passage of the *Cratylus* (400B–C; cf. *Theaetetus* 197C) where Plato explains the *sōma/sēma* or body/grave (prison) analogy. In Euripides, *periboloi lainoi (Trojan Women* 1141) are the "stony sides" of a tomb. Scott's comment (II, 186) depends on another meaning of *peribolē*, "cloak" or "wrapping." Like Puech (1953–6), pp. 196–7, Dodds, *Anxiety*, pp. 29–36, sets this chain of metaphors in the context (see *C.H.* I.18–19) of

"that contempt for the human condition and hatred of the body [which] was a disease endemic in the entire culture of the period … [but whose] more extreme manifestations are mainly Christian or Gnostic." For "dark" (*skoteinon*) as connoting material evil, see Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 130–1; *C.H.* I.4, 28.

***the one … he hates*:** Dodd (*Bible*, p. 182, n. 4) considers this phrase untranslatable; likewise Scott II, 187. Festugière (NF, 81–82, 84, n. 12; cf. FR I, 271; Zielinski [1905], p. 340) has "le compagnon qui, par les choses qu'il aime, te hait, et par les choses qu'il hait, te jalouse."

VII. 3 ***inapparent and unrecognized*:** Adopting Festugière's reading for a phrase excluded by Nock: *ta mē dokounta kai nomizomena* for *kai mē nomizomena*; NF I, 82, 84, n. 15.

VIII
That none of the things that are is destroyed and they are mistaken who say that changes are deaths and destructions

Title For similar teachings Festugière (NF I, 85, 87, n. 1; cf. Scott II, 189–94) refers to *C.H.* XI.14–16, XII.15–16; he adds, however, that this treatise "implicitly denies any survival of individual consciousness since the human composite dissolves with its elements. One should not be fooled by the sub-title." For the diatribe form in this and other discourses, see *C.H.* II.12, VIII.2 and IX.1.

VIII. 1 ***first syllable*:** Literally, "first letter"; the words are *thanatos* and *athanatos*.

***living thing that reasons*:** The single adjective *logikon* implies speech as well as reason; cf. *C.H.* XII. 12–13; *A.D.* 4.1 ; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 371.

VIII.2 ***God is … first*:** Mahé (*Hermès* II, 426–7) believes that *C.H.* VIII is composed of three "sentences" (see below, note on *C.H.* IX. 1) on god, the cosmos and mankind embedded in a commentary with mythic, narrative elements. On this section, see also Festugière (1949a), pp. 266–7.

***in his image*:** Above, *C.H.* I.12.

***eternal father*:** NF I, 87, following Turnebus, corrects *idiou* to *aïdiou* ("eternal").

***to be, ⟨however⟩*:** The particle (*de*) corresponding to "however" is an editorial insertion in NF I, 87, following W. Kroll.

***This is … through himself*:** NF I, 88, obelizes the first part of this passage and leaves it untranslated. The version suggested here entails three changes conjectured by Einarson: replacing *to* with *touto* ("this"), adding *di* ("through") before *hou* ("whom") and again before *heautou* ("himself").

{*everliving*} … {*eternal*} *father*: Reading *aïdiou aeizōos* for *aïdios*, which NF I, 88–9, n. 8, marks unintelligible; Scott II, 195.

VIII.3 {*took … desired*}: Where Nock (NF I, 88) indicates a gap in the text after *tō heautou*, Scott supplies *thelēmati*, literally "by his own will," after which Festugière (p. 89, n. 10) suggests *labōn*, literally "taking."

***qualities of forms*:** *Asclep*. 2–5, 34; Scott IVF, 373.

***as in a cave*:** More than Plato's famous myth (*Republic* 514–17), Porphyry's brief allegorical exegesis of *Odyssey* 13.102–12, *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, is relevant here. Porphyry (Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 135–6; Bidez, *Porphyre*, pp. 109, 70*) sees the rock, the waters and the darkness of the cave as matter's obduracy, variability and obscurity; Festugière (NF I, 89, n. 11, 91) also points out that the cave was a symbol of the world in Mithraism; see also Scott II, 197–8.

***what comes after him*:** Reading *to met auton poion* for *to met autou poion*\ Ficino, *Opera*, II, p. 1845, has "id quod post ipsum est."

***matter has … have qualities*:** Adopting Nock's suggestion (NF I, 88, 90, n. 15) of *ataxian* ("disorder") after *eiloumenēn* ("confined to"), although Nock marks the phrase unintelligible, as does Scott II, p. 198.

property of increase and decrease: NF I, 90, n. 16, notes that the soul loses this property of embodiment when it rises toward the heights in *C.H.* I.25.

VIII. 4 *by the recurrence … earthly bodies*: See above, note on *C.H.* I.17, and below, on *C.H.* XI.2; NF I, 90, n. 17.

{*the dissolution of their composition*}: NF I, 88, indicates a lacuna after *sustaseōs* ("composition"), which Einarson fills with *dialusis* ("dissolution").

VIII. 5 *mankind … possessing mind*: NF I, 89, following Foix de Candale, reads *noun* ("mind") for *ou* ("not") in the manuscripts; for optimist views of the human condition, see below *Asclep*. 6; above, *C.H.* I.12, for the general senses of *anthrōpos* ("mankind," "human") here and in sections 1 and 3 above.

sympathy with the second: This is the only mention in the seventeen Greek treatises of *sumpatheia*, the Stoic doctrine (Scott II, 200–1;

Sambursky, *Physics*, pp. 9, 41–44, 110) of the organic unity of the living cosmos; for Neoplatonic versions of the same idea, see Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 25, 70–1, 107–10, 120–3.
what god is: A catechetical formula, according to Scott IVF, 374; Norden, *Agnostos*, p. 108.

IX
On understanding and sensation: [That the beautiful and good are in god alone and nowhere else]

Title The bracketed words do not fit this treatise; in fact, they better describe part of *C.H.* VI, on which see title, 4–5; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 194–5; FR II, 12; NF I, 92, n. 1, 96, n. 1; II, 284–5, also noting the resemblances between *C.H.* VIII and IX as well as those between IX and the *Asclepius*, which Festugière calls "the continuation of the *teleios logos*" as does Scott II, 203; cf. *Asclep*. Title, 8, and *C.H.* IX.6.

IX.1 ***perfect discourse*:** The *Asclepius* is a Latin translation of a Greek original entitled *Teleios logos*, which Lactantius rendered *Sermo perfectus;* NF I, 96–7, n. 2; II, 275–7; Scott IV, 22; above, note on title.
***Apparently … essential*:** Festugière (NF I, 97–8, n. 3; 106, n. 3) agrees with Scott (II, 206–8) that the rejection of this Platonic principle shows Stoic influence, and he remarks on two senses of *noēsis* in this discourse: in sections 1–2, distinctive human understanding; in 5 and 9, the divine gift of *gnōsis* Reitzenstein, *HMR*, p. 433, describes the *noēsis* that leads to *gnōsis* as "the perception (*aisthanesthai*) of the suprasensory, in contrast to actual *aisthēsis* the perception of the sensory." Mahé (*Hermès* II, 416–21) identifies this as the first in a chain of linked "sentences" or "maxims" (*gnōmai*) which, in his view, constitute the fabric of the entire treatise; he analyzes sections 1–5 to show how thirty sentences are linked by brief conjunctions or longer redactional passages, and he finds comparable material in other Hermetic treatises. Fowden (*EH*, pp. 68–74), however, thinks that Mahé exaggerates the influence of Egyptian "wisdom" or "instruction" literature on the *Hermetica*, arguing for the significance of

such other genres as the Platonic dialogue, the Cynic diatribe and the Egyptian priestly literature; see: *C.H.* I.31; II.12; VIII.Title, 2; *Asclep*. 7. The manuscripts have *kinēsis* ("motion") where NF I, 96, reads *noēsis* ("understanding"), as in section 5 below.

***other living … understanding*:** Cf. *C.H.* IV.5; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 417.

⟨*as well*⟩: Translating the *k*ai ("as well") inserted in NF I, 96.

***Mind differs … reasoned speech*:** Festugière (NF I, 92–3, 96, 101–3, nn. 5–6, 9, 19; cf. Scott I, 179, II, 208–9; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 6) believes that these sentences form a digression from the main subject, which is taken up again at the beginning of section 2. He identifies the remainder of sections 1–2 with 6–9 as the main body of the discourse, seeing the other "digression" in 3–5 and the conclusion in 10 as more concerned with *gnōsis* than the rest of the dialogue. He gives "l'activité divine" for *theiotēs* ("divinity"), but Scott suggests "divine influence" or "divine inspiration." See also: *C.H.* VIII.1, XII.13; *A.D.* 5.1; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 373, 418.

IX.2 {***to have sensation***}**:** Reading *aisthanthēnai* for *aisthēnai*, obelized in NF I, 96.

***Can understanding*:** Nock (NF I, 96) suggests that this and the next paragraph may represent a change in speakers, but one can also read the text as a monologue.

{***It seems … always combined***}**:** Nock (NF I, 96–7, 101, n. 8) marks unintelligible a sequence of sixteen words, but Festugière supplies a "hypothetical" translation that follows Ferguson's (Scott IVF, 374–5) substitution of *apogegonenai* ("eliminated") for *gegonenai* and his insertion of *aei hēnōtai noēsis* ("understanding … always combined") after *egrēgorousi gar* ("wake"). Ferguson interprets the passage in light of Stoic doctrine on a "common reason" (*koinos logos*) joining *nous* and *aisthēsis* ("sensation").

⟨*sensation*⟩ *is distributed*: "Sensation" (*hē aisthēsis*) is Scott's addition; NF I, 97, 101, n. 8.

IX.3 ***Mind conceives … demonic*:** On the mind as passive matrix for divine or demonic seeds, see Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 192–3.

{***Unless … by god***}**:** Festugière, referring to *C.H.* XVI. 13–16, does not translate this phrase, obelized by Nock. The words "unless" and "illuminated" (*plēn tou … pephōtismenou*) depend on Einarson's emendations, excisions and additions. Cumont identifies a large lacuna at the end of the obelized phrase, and Festugière lets it stand; NF I, 97, 102, n. 11; Scott I, 180–1; Rose (1947), p. 103.

***no part … demon*:** Cf. *C.H.* XVI.16; *S.H.* VI.12; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 419.

***adulteries … cliff*:** Festugière (NF I, 102, n. 12) does not believe that these are the seven planetary vices, as in *C.H.* I.25, but cf. Scott II, 213, and Zielinski (1905), pp. 331–3, who lists parallels from *C.H.* I.23, 25; VI.1, 3; see also Cumont, *Egypte*, p. 135; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 419.

IX.4 ***Reverence is knowledge of god*:** Lactantius cites a Greek phrase very close to this in *Divine Institutes* 2.15.6. Among several biblical and classical authorities, Norden, *Agnostos*, quotes Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.61.153: "Quae contuens animus accedit ad cognitionem deorum, e qua oritur pietas," i.e., "the knowledge of god, from which reverence arises"; see also: *C.H.* I.27, VI.5, X.4, 8–9; *Asclep.* 12; Festugière, *Religion*, pp. 133–4; NF I, 97; Scott IV, 15.

***one who … are divine*:** NF I, 97, 103, n. 13, has "tient ses intellections de Dieu même" or "a des pensées dignes de Dieu" for *tas noēseis theias ischei*; cf. *Asclep.* 1; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 419.

***those … in knowledge … murdered*:** Scott II, 204–5, puts the date of *C.H.* IX "shortly after" the *Asclepius*, "about A.D. 280–300." Thus, he sees the hostility expressed here to those "in gnosis" as a later manifestation of the religious tensions described in *Asclep.* 24–6.; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, p. 368, cites Rom. 8:28–30.

I have said … blasphemously*:** "I have said" **(eipon en***)** is a correction, following Scott, of *eipomen* in the manuscripts; NF I, 98. For an example of such blasphemy, see notes on *C.H.* VI.4 and section 9 below, another case of what Fowden (*EH*, p. 103) calls "internal Hermetist polemics" and Jonas and Festugière (*Gnosis* I, p. 154; NF I, 103, nn. 15–16, II, 371–2, n. 135) describe as "polémique antignostique," citing Plato (*Theaetetus* 176A; *Timaeus* 48A, 68E; *Statesman* 269C–70A, 272D–3E; *Laws* 896E–8C) as the source of the idea that the lower, material cosmos must be evil. Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, p. 17, calls this "an intermediate position"

between an optimist cosmic religion and pessimist Gnosticism, and Bousset (1914), pp. 107–8, interprets this treatise as a "conglomerate" of optimistic and pessimistic views on the cosmos, characterizing the latter as un-Greek. Zielinski (1905), pp. 335–6, who reads *C.H.* VI as the strongest expression of "Peripatetic" dualism in the Corpus, sees *C.H.* IX as "Platonic" dualism: in the former, the cosmos itself is the source of evil, while in the latter only earthly matter is to blame; see above, *C.H.* I.9. Mahé, *Hermès* II, p. 420, cites VI.4 as containing a "sentence" parallel to this passage. The words "I have said" seem compatible both with Mahé's view and with Fowden's (above).

IX.5 ***as I said before … As I mentioned*:** See: *C.H.* I.15, 21–2, 32; IV.3; X.6; XIII.14; XV.5; *Asclep. 7*; FR IV, 6; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 420. But whether the similar language above in section 4 ("as I have said") has reference in the Corpus is less clear, though it does recall Plato, *Theaetetus* 176A–B; NF I, 97–8, 103–4, nn. 15, 20, 21; Scott II, 213.

***God … himself*:** Mahé, *Hermès* II, 420, refers to *C.H.* I.12.

***to differ … grinds away*:** "To differ" represents *diaphora*, Nock's emendation (NF I, 98) of *aphora*, following L. Ménard. For *tribousa* ("grinds away"), the reading of the manuscripts, Festugière (NF I, 98, 104, n. 22) has "par sa friction," though he doubts its correctness; Scott (I, 182–3; II, 215–16) amends to *trepousa*, "varies." However, see above, note on *C.H.* V.4; note also the occurrence of *organon* in this earlier passage and in section 6, below.

***some it … the good*:** In this passage through section 9 below, Zielinski (1905), pp. 336–8, sees signs of a "pantheistic realism," in contrast to the Peripatetic and Platonic dualisms that he identified elsewhere; above, section 4, *C.H.* I.9. VI.4.

***understanding*, *Asclepius* :** NF I, 98, following Foix de Candale, reads *noēsin* for *kinēsin*, as in section 1 above.

IX.6 ***sensation … the instrument*:** The supplicant in *NHC* VI.6.30–1, calls himself "the instrument" of God's spirit and calls *nous* the "plectrum" of the divinity; below, *C.H.* XVIII.2; above, note on Title; Keizer, *Discourse*, pp. 16, 38.

***into itself*:** Reading *heauton* ("itself") to agree with *kosmos*, in place of *heautēn*; NF I, 99, 104, n. 23, following Scott.
***good farmer*:** Scott II, 218–19, points out that *PGM* I.26 (Betz, p. 3) calls on Agathodaimon, a counterpart of the Egyptian Khnum, as *agathe geōrge*. For other instances of this image and the related *phutourgos* ("planter" or "gardener"), see NF I, 104, n. 26.
***There is ⟨nothing⟩*:** The negative (*ouk*) is an editorial addition, following Turnebus; NF I, 99.

IX.7 ***the cosmos breathes*:** Literally, "breath" (*pnoē*), a noun related to *pneuma*, on which see above, note on *C.H.* I.5. See also section 8 below, "breathed into things by the atmosphere"; and section 9, "making life through spirit"; NF I, 104, n. 28; Scott II, 220.

IX.8 ***made by the cosmos*:** NF I, 99, 105, n. 30, has "issus du" for the preposition *hupo*, which in any event expresses agency.
"***cosmos*" *or* "*arrangement*" *… necessary and fitting*:** Both ideas, cosmos and arrangement, are expressed by the same word, *kosmos*, on which see above, note on *C.H.* IV. 1–2; Scott IVF, 376. For "associability" (*sustasei*), adopted from Foix de Candale's emendation of *suskiasei* ("shadowing"), NF I, 99, has "combinaison."

IX.9 ***not without … excess*:** In this passage Zielinski (1905), p. 337, and Fowden, *EH*, p. 113, discern another case of Hermetist polemic (above, note on section 4), this time with reference to *C.H.* II.5.
***depend from on high*:** The verb *artaō* in the *Hermetica* signifies a lower being's derivation from, subordination to and dependence on a higher (NF I, 157, n. 10; cf. Scott IVF, 396–7); here, the translation "depend from" rather than "depend on" is less awkward than in other cases, for which see *C.H.* X.14, 15, 23; XI.4; XVI.4, 17; Scott IVF, 376.

IX.10 ***to understand is to believe*:** In this sense "to understand" (*noēsai*) stands in opposition to the "reasoned discourse" (*logos*) mentioned below; it is equated with belief (*pisteusai*). This equation, argues Dodds (*Anxiety*, pp. 120–3), was a profound departure from pagan opinion, even for Neoplatonists before Porphyry. To a person educated in classical

philosophy, *pistis* was a lower state of mind since it was assent without reasoned conviction, *logismos*; Christians were attacked as irrational for their exaltation of *pistis*. Dodds's interpretation of *pistis* stands in contrast to Fowden's remarks (*EH*, p. 101) on this passage: "One could hardly wish for a more concise statement of the ancients' conviction that divine and human knowledge, reason and intuition, are interdependent." Bultmann (*TDNT* VI, 179–82) finds that *pistis* was not a religious term in classical Greek but that it acquired religious meanings in Hellenistic times, especially in the polemic sparked by the proselytizing religions. Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 293–6, concludes that this section of *C.H.* IX is "the best documentation" for *pistis* in the sense of religious faith, which he finds "not exactly common in pagan literature … but … not totally absent." Bousset, *Kyrios*, pp. 200–7, emphasizes Philo's transformation of the Stoic philosopher's internal conviction into another kind of confidence rooted in God. *Pistis* could even be personified, as in the *Pistis Sophia*. In the *Hermetica*, Festugière (NF I, 97–8, 105, nn. 3, 35–6) discerns "a rather well defined notion of faith": revelation leads to the *gnōsis* that enables one to believe in the unseen. The understanding (*noēsis*) associated with *pistis* and *gnōsis* is not the cognition produced by a process of reasoning; it is the immediate insight or intuition given to the mystic or the initiate. For other occurrences of *pistis* and its cognates in the Greek treatises, see *C.H.* I.32; IV.4, 5, 9; VI.6; XI.1; XVI.4; *Asclep.* 29; and for Gnostic texts, Layton, *GS*, pp. 68, 261, 282, 294, 305, 321–2, 337, 349, 433; see also above, *C.H.* I.26–8.

***not to believe … powerful*:** Festugière (NF I, 105, n. 35) inserts the article (*to*) before the infinitive *apistēsai* ("not … believe"). The third negative (*ou*) is Nock's emendation, following Zielinski, of *mou* or *moi* in the manuscripts.

***guided … ⟨as far as⟩*:** For "guided" (*hodēgētheis*), see above, *C.H.* I.26–7; NF I, 100, inserts *heōs* ("as far as").

***considered … carefully*:** Festugière has "embrassé d'une même vue," but cf. Sleeman and Pollet s.v. *perinoein*, and NF I, 105–6, n. 37.

X

[Discourse] of Hermes Trismegistus: The key

Title Scott II, 231–2, claims that the title "Key" implies access to a mystery, but Festugière (NF I, 107; FR I, 12–13; cf. Fowden, *EH*, p. 104) thinks that it indicates the compendious nature of the treatise, as suggested by the word "summary" (*epitomē*) in section 1 below. Nock (NF I, 112, 114–15, n. 2) notes that the compendium is strikingly incoherent and puts it at a "relatively late" date. For a "Key" attributed to Moses, see *PGM* XIII.22, 31, 36, 60, 383, 431, 737 (Betz, pp. 172–3, 182, 184, 189); Mussies (1982), p. 94; Gager, *Moses*, p. 149; above, *C.H.* I.4, note on "light."

X.1 ***Yesterday's discourse … to him*:** Festugière (NF I, 113, n. 1) notes that the ninth treatise also begins with a reference (perhaps from a compiler) to a discourse delivered on the previous day, but Scott (II, 228–32) finds more resemblances in the tenth treatise to the second and the sixth. The *General Discourses* (*genikōn logon*; *genikōn* is an emendation, following Patrizi, of *henikōn*) – also mentioned in section 7 below and in *C.H.* XIII.l, *S.H.* III.l, VI.l, *VF* B.6 – may have been a set of treatises distinguished from another "detailed" (*diexodikoi*) set, perhaps alluded to in *C.H.* V.l (*diexeleusomai*) and *Asclep.* 1, reading *diexodicaque* for *exoticaque*; see also XIV. 1. *NHC* VI. 6.63.2–3 speaks of "general and guiding (*exodiakoi*) discourses." Fowden (*EH*, pp. 97–100) believes that most of the philosophical *Hermetica*, with the exception of the "initiatory" treatises *C.H.* I, *C.H.* XIII and *NHC* VI.6, belong to this category of preliminary discourses containing information of interest to the beginner in "philosophical *paideia*" (below, note on *C.H.* XIII.9); see also: Cyril, *Against Julian* 553A, 588B (NF IV, 135–6, 141–2; Scott IV, 204, 215); W. Kroll, PW VIII/1, cols. 796–7; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 117; NF I, 113–15, n. 2; II, 297, 357, n. 9; FR II, 7–8; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 67–9; Parrott, *NHC* VI, p. 371; Keizer, *Discourse*, pp. 59–61, 83–6.

***rather activity … ⟨applies⟩ also*:** The word translated here as "activity" is *energeia*, which occurs forty-three times in the Greek treatises. In the most general senses of "activity," it appears from pre-Socratic times onward. As a technical term in Peripatetic philosophy, it means "act" as opposed to "potency," but in the Hellenistic period *energeia* acquired a new set of technical applications as a "force" in cosmological, astrological, magical and demonological contexts. The biblical *energeia*,

for example, is almost always demonic or divine. Festugière (NF I, 134, n. 75; 140–2) believes that this is often (e.g., section 22 below) its meaning in the *Hermetica*, especially astrological "influence" or magical "force." See *TDNT* II, 652–4; Scott II, 233, 277; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 200–4.

{***growth***} ***and increase*****:** NF I, 113, obelizes "growth" (*phuseōs*), noting Scott's suggestion of *phusis geneseōs* in the apparatus.

move … ⟨to the⟩ unmoved**:** NF I, 113, shows a lacuna after "move" (*kinēta*); my translation adopts Nock's suggestion of supplying four words (*hē de … peri ta*) before "and" and "unmoved" (*kai* and *akinēta*).

to the divine … occasions**:** After *anthrōpeia* NF I, 113, marks unintelligible a string of seven words; the translation given here is based on Scott's reconstruction as reproduced in the apparatus of NF and involves transposition and addition of words.

X.2 ***God's … will*****:** For other Hermetic treatments of the divine will, Festugière (NF I, 115–16, n. 4) cites *C.H.* I.8, IV.l, XIII.2 and *Asclep*. 8, 19, 20, 26; see also XIII.19; Lewy, *Oracles*, p. 331.

For what … their existence**:** This translation is closer to Festugière's version in FR IV, 6, n. 4, 57, n. 2, than to NF I, 113–14, n. 4a; Nock obelizes the last five words of the passage, *alia huparxin autēn tōn ontōn* ("at least … existence") and suspects a gloss.

⟨as⟩ also the sun**:** Inserting *hōs* ("as") before *kai* ("also") with NF I, 114, 117, n. 6.

X.3 ***in that he ⟨wills⟩*****:** FR IV, 57, suggests the insertion of "wills" (*thelein*); cf. NF I, 114, 119, n. 12.

X.4 ***So it is … can see*****:** A difficult ellipsis according to Nock; NF I, 114.

this seeing to happen**:** FR IV, 60.

{***and it … chiefly***}**:** In FR IV, 60–1, Festugière does not adopt the reading that he suggests in NF I, 114, 119, n. 14; Nock obelizes five words (*kai autō*, *malista de auto*) which Festugière alters only by adding a comma after *de*.

because of it … recognized**:** Reading *touto* ("it") for *touton* as in FR IV, 60; NF I, 120, n. 15; Nock (114) has *touton* and shows the lacuna after

estin (“happens”) identified by Scott, but in FR IV, 57, n. 1, 60, Festugière dispenses with the lacuna.

⟨***This***⟩ ***is the good*****:** “This” (*touto*) is Festugière’s addition in FR IV, 57, n. 1.

is almost {***blinded***}**:** The verb in the manuscripts, “feels dread” (*esebasthē*), is obelized by Nock (NF I, 114); for “is … blinded” (*esbesthē*), see Scott IVF, 376; Festugière, *Religion*, pp. 137–8, 176; see also: NF I, 120, n. 16; Scott II, 238; Helderman (1982), pp. 245–6.

dazzles the eyes**:** The verb (*kataugazō*), which means “light up” or “shine upon,” also refers to the occultation of a planet or star by the sun; NF I, 120, n. 17; LSJ s.v. *kataugazō*, 2. Festugière (*HMP*, pp. 48–9; FR I, 360) describes the passage that begins here and extends through section 6 as characteristic of one current of Hermetic *gnōsis*, which knows God through illumination and revelation rather than reason and investigation; thus, the Hermetic formula in this dialogue is *novit qui colit* (“he knows God who worships him”) rather than Seneca’s *colit qui novit* (*Letter* 95.47), the inverse attitude that Festugière finds in *C.H.* V.3, where the advice is: “If you want to see god, understand the sun”; see above, IX.4; below, X.9–10; *Asclep*. 12; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 285, 291–2, 369.

X.5 ***often fall … ancestors*****:** Zielinski (1905), pp. 346–8, interprets escape from the body as a motif of the Platonist asceticism that he finds in sections 4–9 of *C.H.* X, connecting those passages with the *General Discourses* (above, section 1) and distinguishing them from the *Konkordanztheologie* of sections 10–25. Nock (NF I, 115), following Tiedemann, omits a particle (*de*) after “often” (*pollakis*). Scott (II, 240–1) thinks that Ouranos and Kronos may be Greek versions of the Egyptian gods Shu and Seb, the latter an earth god, the former a god of the atmosphere. Shu and Seb were sometimes regarded as ancestors – grandfather and father – of Thoth or Hermes. For the Euhemerist idea that Kronos and Ouranos were originally men who attained the vision of the good after death and deification, see the references to this passage in Lactantius (*Divine Institutes* 1.11.61; *Epitome* 14.2–4) and Psellus (*Allegory on Tantalos*) in Scott IV, 243–4; NF I, 122–3, n. 22. From this material and from Neoplatonic commentaries on the *Republic* and other works of Plato, Waszink (1950), pp. 639–53, adds an Orphic coloration to the Euhemerism, via Aristotle’s exoteric works.

***not yet strong*:** NF I, 115, reads *oupō* for *houtōs*, following Patrizi.
***divine silence*:** Scott II, 241; NF I, 124, n. 25; *C.H.* I.30; XIII.2.

X.6 ***motions forgotten*:** The manuscripts have *epilabomenos* ("taken"), but the *Anonymi Christiani Hermippus*, *de astrologia dialogus* suggests *epilathomenos* ("forgotten"); see: Scott II, 241–2, 432–4; NF I, 115; *C.H.* XVI.4.
***illuminated … kindles*:** For *perilampsan, analampei* here and *eklampei* in section 4 above, see Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 117–19, 123; *C.H.* V.2, XVI.16.
***⟨the⟩ beauty*:** NF I, 116, adopts this scribal addition of the article *to*.
***cannot … human body*:** See below, note on *C.H.* XIII. 1, "born again," on the time of divinization; NF I, 125–6, n. 27; Festugière, *Religion*, pp. 125–6; Scott II, 238, 240–2, IVF, 377; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 369–72.

X.7 ***changes*:** Cf. below, *C.H.* X.19; NF I, 126, n. 29; Scott II, 243–4.
***General … of the all*:** From the phrase *ouk ēkousas* in section 7 through the end of the dialogue, many passages are reproduced by Stobaeus and used by Nock to correct the defective manuscripts of the Corpus; above, section 1, for *"General";* Bousset (1914), p. 155. FR II, 81–2, sees this passage as a dogmatic expression of the Stoic teaching on the world-soul as the origin of the human soul, referring to section 15, below, and *C.H.* XI.4.

X.8 ***perfect glory*:** The Greek word *doxa* can mean "opinion," which for Plato (*Symposium* 202A; below, note on sections 9–10) was a state of mind between ignorance and knowledge; it can also mean the "reputation" one has in the opinion of others – hence, "glory." Both meanings are within the range of normal Greek usage, and both occur in the *Hermetica* ; for "opinion" in the pejorative sense, see *C.H.* VI.3, XII. 3, XVI. 1, and for "glory" see *C.H.* III.l, XIV.7. Nock and Kittel (NF I, 126–7, n. 32; *TDNT* II, 252) think that the ordinary Greek sense applies here, but in the New Testament and the Septuagint *doxa* often stands for the Hebrew *kabōd*, god's presence as experienced by humans "in the form of radiance, splendour, or dazzling light" (Dodd, *Fourth Gospel* p. 206), a meaning also present in the Magical Papyri: *PGM* XIII.570–5 (Betz, p. 186);

Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 358–61; Scott IVF, 377; *TDNT* II, 233–7, 242, 247, 252–3.

X.8–9 ***vice … virtue of soul*:** Mahé, *Hermès* II, p. 383, points out similar language in *A.D.* 7.5; see also *C.H.* VI.5, IX.4.

X.8 ***is shaken by*:** Reading *entinassetai* with Scott I, 192, following Tiedemann; cf. NF I, 117; Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 15.
***monstrous bodies*:** This translation is closer to FR III, 105, n. 2, than to NF I, 117, 127, n. 36; in the former volume, Festugière points out (against Scott I, 193, n. 3; II, 244–5) that all bodies, not just those of lower animals, are hostile to soul; cf. Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 15; *Asclep*. 12.

X.9 ***one who knows … divine*:** Reitzenstein, *HMR*, p. 380, finds this a distinctly "oriental" conception.
***time on talking*:** Reading *dialogois* ("talking") for *duo logois* with FR IV, 62, n. 1, from Scott I, 192; cf. NF I, 116, 127, n. 38; Scott II, 246. On the injunction to silence, see also: *C.H.* I.30; *A.D.* 5.2–3; *NHC* VI.6.56–9; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 301.
***object prevails*:** The Greek text has no word corresponding to "object." The verb (*epikrateō*) means "conquer," "prevail," "master," "govern." Festugière (NF I, 117, 127, n. 39), who has "la sensation ne se produit qu'en dépendance de l'objet qui fait impression sur nous" for *aisthēsis men gar ginetai tou epikratountos*, explains the Stoic notion that the soul in sensing material objects is altered by the effluvia that it receives from them; i.e., the soul is somehow "mastered" by material objects when it *senses* them, though it is free when it *thinks* or *reasons* about them. Scott I, 192–3, inserting *hulikou* ("material") before *epikratountos*, has "Sense-perception takes place when that which is material has the mastery."

X.9–10 ***goal of learning … all learning*:** On learning as "a gift of god," see note on *C.H.* IV.5. For *epistēmē*, "learning" is not the most desirable translation, but "knowledge" in the *Hermetica* should be reserved for *gnōsis*, and "science" is more anachronistic in English than in Festugière's French. Beyond these three occurrences of the word, there are seven others in the Greek treatises (*C.H.* IV.6, X.22, XI. 20, XVIII.2–3); in the

last of these passages "skill" is my translation. Fowden (*EH*, p. 101), comparing *C.H.* X.9 with *S.H.* IIB.2–3, distinguishes *epistēmē* as the product of reason (*logos*) from *gnōsis* as the product of understanding (*noēsis*) and faith (*pistis*). Thus, to say that *gnōsis* is the goal of *epistēmē* means that "knowledge of god's creation is an essential preliminary to knowledge of god himself" in a progressive "way of Hermes" or "philosophical *paideia*," on which see below, note on *C.H.* XIII.9 (also, note on section 4, "dazzles the eyes"). For Plato (*Republic* 476–480), the forms (*eidē*) are known by *epistēmē* while objects of sense (*aisthēta*) are perceived in *doxa* (above, note on section 8). On the other hand, the *Hermetica* are *epistēmē* (often coupled with *technē*, "art" or "skill") in the Aristotelian sense (*Metaphysics* 1025b–1026a) of an organized body of knowledge, i.e., acquired knowledge, whence "learning." See: Peters, *Terms*, pp. 59–61; NF I, 134–5, n. 77; Scott II, 247. In his translations of Gnostic texts, Layton (*GS*, p. 9) systematically represents *gnōsis* and equivalent terms in Coptic and Latin with "acquaintance," pointing out that "the ancient Greek language could easily differentiate between two kinds of knowing … propositional knowing – the knowledge that something is the case … *eidenai* (French *savoir*), … [and] personal acquaintance … *gignōskein* (French *connaître*)."

X.10 ***body … mental*:** Following Einarson, NF I, 118, reads two words, *sōma ta* ("body … the") for the single word *somata* ("bodies").
***affected … feel affect*:** For *eupathētos … pathētōn* NF I, 118, has "aisement affecté … passibles." See above, note on *C.H.* VI.2.
***once it has … exists*:** NF I, 118, 128, n. 45, points out that this passage is contradicted in *C.H.* XI. 13, and that Reitzenstein (*Poimandres*, p. 40, n. 1) proposed an emendation that would resolve the contradiction, inserting a negative in the slightly rearranged phrase *kai autos men* ⟨*oude*⟩ *potegenomenos*, whereby the English would become "since it has never come to be, it exists forever; it exists in becoming."

X.11 ***immobility … moved spherically*:** Festugière (NF I, 128, n. 46, 137–8; FR I, 92–3) points out that the derivation of motion from immobility recalls *C.H.* II.8, but (unlike Scott II, 249) he sees little relation in what follows to the teachings of *C.H.* II or to the *Timaeus* (33B, 40A, 44D–E). Referring to Reitzenstein, *Studien*, pp. 71–99, he finds "oriental"

analogues for the spherical cosmos with head and feet in: Orphic fragments (168.10–32 [Kern, pp. 201–2]); texts connected with Sarapis (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.20.16–18); the Greek Magical Papyri (*PGM* XIII.770–5, XXI.5–10 [Betz, pp. 190, 259]); and the *Kephalaia* of Mani (70.1.169–76). On the other hand, Ferguson's explanation (Scott IVF, 377), based on Stoic sources, is that "the Cosmos, by its shape and movement, is identified with a head, all below being material … and nothing being material above"; cf. *Asclep*. 23.

***membrane … ⟨in which⟩*:** The words "in which" (*en hē*) are an editorial addition; an alternative is *en hō*, in which case "membrane" rather than "head" is the antecedent of "which." The notion that the higher, intellectual soul resides in the brain's membrane (*humēn*) can be found in the physician Erasistratus, and the *Chaldaean Oracles* (Des Places, 6.1 [p. 68]) speak of a membrane of soul enclosing the sensible cosmos and dividing it from the intelligible world. Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.9.15 ascribes similar ideas to the Naasene heretics. See: NF I, 118, 128, n. 47; Scott II, 250–2, n. 3, IVF, 377–8; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 90–2, 353–5.

***have more soul*:** The word "more" represents *pleiona*, an emendation of *plei* and similar forms in the manuscripts: NF I, 118.

X.13 ***soul is carried*:** The verb is *ocheitai*, on which see below, section 16; above, *C.H.* III.2; NF I, 129–30, n. 48; *Chaldaean Oracles* 120, 201 (Des Places, pp. 96, 113); Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 178–84; and other citations in Bousset (1914), pp. 174–5.

***the mind … bears it up*:** Festugière (NF I, 129, n. 49) explains that the series spirit–soul–reason–mind, each containing the next, is a Stoic idea, but that spirit (*pneuma*) also plays the role of "spiritual vehicle" in the doctrine of the *ochēma*; above, note on *C.H.* III.2; cf. X.16, 21, XI.4, XII. 13–14. Scott II, 253–5, points out similar material in *Hermippus* 1.13.96–9 (above, section 6), and Scott IVF, 378, mentions Neoplatonic sources.

***spirit must … emptied*:** Greek medical opinion (*TDNT* VI, 352–7) varied on the function of veins and arteries as carriers of blood and spirit. Festugière (NF I, 129, 131, nn. 50, 56) thinks that this whole sentence and the related (but contradictory) material at the beginning of section 16, below, could be glosses; see also Scott II, 255–8.

X.14 ***these three … and the human*:** Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 348–54, and J. Kroll, *Lehren*, p. 31, note the frequency of this triple formula; above, sections 1–3; cf. *A.D.* 1.1; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 359; above, *C.H.* I.12, on *anthrōpos*.

X.15 ***For god … recognized*:** Above, *C.H.* I.31; FR IV, 58.

***deliverance … knowledge*:** Above, *C.H.* I.26–7, for the equivalence of *sōtēria* and *gnōsis*; Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 23–4.

***good only … good ⟨forever⟩*:** NF I, 120, corrects *monōn* to *monōs* ("only"), and inserts *aei* ("forever").

***not yet …* {*of … as yet*}:** The verb *onkoō* ("endow with bulk") occurs twice in this sentence, four words of which (*eti oligon onkōto kai*) are marked unintelligible in NF I, 120; cf. Cumont, NF I, 130, n. 54; Rose (1947), p. 103. "Gets its bulk" below is from the same verb, and "grossness" represents the related noun (*onkos*). Cumont (NF I, 130, n. 54) explains that the idea of adding bulk has to do with the soul's descent through the spheres from which it accretes a body.

X.16 ***the spirit … the spirit*:** Above, sections 13–14; below, *C.H.* XII. 18; NF I, 131, n. 56. Bousset (1914), pp. 172–80, refers to *S.H.* XXIV.9–10; *Chaldaean Oracles* 44, 61, 104, 121, 158, 176 (Des Places, pp. 78, 82, 92, 104–5, 108); *Pistis Sophia* 3.111–16, 4.142–3; *Second Book of Jeû* 45–8, 51; and other sources to show how the material *pneuma* of the Stoics came to be seen as a lower part of the soul, a conception that led to confusion in this treatise; above, *C.H.* I.5; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 43–7, 120–2, 127–8, 142–4, 173–4, 183–4, 197–9, 213, 262, 358–60, 394–6.

***purified … fiery body*:** Festugière (NF I, 131, nn. 57–8; cf. Layton, *GS*, p. 295) refers to similar Gnostic ideas about removing the garments and cites texts from Porphyry, Proclus, Iamblichus and others to show that this fiery body is demonic; see below, section 18, for the fiery tunic; cf. Scott II, 263–5, IVF, 378.

X.17 ***defiling contact*:** Scott II, 267, for *sunchrōtizomenon*.

***as a shroud … armoring-servant*:** The word translated as "shroud" (*peribolaion*) is related to *peribolē*, on which see the note on *C.H.* VII. 2; for this usage, see Euripides, *Hercules* 549, 1269; LSJ s.v. *peribolaion*.

Festugière (NF I, 121) translates *peribolaion* as "enveloppe," the same word he uses for *enduma* ("garment") here and in the preceding paragraph; the phrase "mortal envelope (*periblēma)* of bitter matter" occurs in *Chaldaean Oracles* 129 (Des Places, p. 98; Lewy, *Oracles*, p. 276, who notes that *chitōn* is a synonym). "Garment" and "shroud" seem better suited to the related ideas of *chitōn* and *ochēma*, as does "armoring-servant" for *hupēretēs*, the normal sense of which is simply "servant," but see LSJ s.v. *hupēretēs*, II.2.a, and *TDNT* VIII, 530–3.

X.18 ***tunic of fire*:** Since soul is ontologically lower than mind, it acts negatively as a *peribolaion* (section 17, above) for mind, but when mind ascends away from body it takes on a demonic garment (note on section 16, above), which it could not support when in the body. Thus, while the *chitōn* in VII.2 must be discarded in order to begin the ascent, the *chitōn* of X.18 must be acquired during the ascent. Dodds (*Elements*, p. 308, n. 1) sees this fiery *chitōn* as closer to Pauline ideas (I Cor. 15:52) or to the influence of the Isis cult than to Orphism or Neoplatonism.

X.19 ***in a sense demonic*:** As Festugière points out (NF I, 132, n. 61; cf. *TDNT* II, 8–9), *daimonios* in this context is a term of praise; see above, notes on sections 16 and 18; cf. *C.H.* XVI. 15; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 195.

***fighting … reverence*:** For *ton tēs eusebeias agōna ēgōnismenē*, NF I, 122, 132, n. 62, has "après avoir combattu le combat de la piété"; "piety" might be better English than "reverence" here and in the passages following, but see above, *C.H.* I.22.

***not allowed*:** Compare this denial (and below, sections 19 and 22) of the migration of souls to sections 7 and 8 above and to *C.H.* 11.17, *Asclep.* 12; NF I, 110, n. 1, 126, n. 29, 132–3, n. 63. Scott II, 269–74, concludes that the rejection of transmigration became a Neoplatonic teaching only with Iamblichus, thus dating *C.H.* X around 300 CE; cf. Scott IVF, 378.

X.20 ***What greater punishment*:** Cumont, *Lux*, pp. 428–9 (and NF I, 133, n. 65) refers to Neoplatonic and other sources for the idea that their own guilt, not physical suffering, is the worst torment of the damned; cf. *Asclep.* 28.

***poor wretch*:** NF I, 123, has "Je suis dévorée, malheureuse," for *diesthiomai hē kakodaimōn*, but note the demonological context as well as

Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 198; Braun, *Jean*, p. 269.

X.21 ***mind … become a demon*:** Festugière (NF I, 133–4, n. 69; 138–40; cf. Scott II, 275–7) discerns two contradictory currents of anthropology in *C.H.* X. In paragraphs 13–19, the human being is a hierarchy of enveloping substances – body, spirit, soul, reason, mind – of which mind, ontologically the highest, is the inmost. At death, when this composite dissolves, mind is liberated to take on the fiery, demonic body that it had to abandon before entering a human body. The reward of the reverent soul is to become pure mind, but the irreverent soul is punished with the burden of vices that it must carry when it enters another human body. In paragraphs 21–5, however, mind itself is a *daimōn*, either a helping spirit sent by divine justice to guide the reverent soul to *gnōsis* or an avenging spirit that leads the irreverent soul to greater sin. Nock (NF I, 140) perceives less contradiction between these two views of mankind than Festugière, who sees the latter doctrine as similar to *C.H.* I and IX.3–5 and less "Greek" than the former.

***scourges of wrongdoing*:** Adopting Patrizi's reading *hamartēmatōn* ("wrongdoings")for *hamartanontōn* ("wrongdoers"); NF I, 123, 133, n. 68, has "réservés aux pêcheurs," but see *TDNT* I, 293–302, on the rarity of a genuine sense of sin (i.e., intentional and culpable hostility to god) in the use of *hamartanō* and related words; for other instances in the *Hermetica*, see *C.H.* I.20, IV.4 and XIII. 14; for Gnostic texts, see Layton, *GS*, pp. 49, 189, 340, 348, 382–3, 444.

***hymning … word*:** Following Foix de Candale, NF I, 124, reads *humnousa* ("hymning") for *hupnousa* and *eu poiousa* ("blessing") for *empoiousa*.

X.22 ***energies are like rays*:** Above, note on section 1.

***arts … learning*:** NF I, 135, n. 77; Scott II, 278; *Asclep.* 8; and above, note on sections 9–10 on *epistēmē*.

X.23 ***Nothing is …* (*mind*):** NF I, 124, following Foix de Candale, adds the pronoun (*hou*) that refers to "mind."

***the good demon*:** Ganschinietz, PW Suppl. III, col. 54, and other authorities have distinguished "der gute Genius" in this section from the

more concrete figure of Agathodaimon in *C.H.* XII. 1, 8, 9, 13. Cyril of Alexandria (*Against Julian* 588A–B; Scott IV, 213–14; frgs. 31, 32b in NF IV, 136–40) cites a *Discourse to Asclepius* in which Osiris addresses the "greatest Good Demon" (*megiste Agathos Daimōn*), also calling him *trismegiste* ("thrice-greatest") *Agathos Daimōn*. Festugière (NF III, clxii–clxviii) mentions these texts in analyzing *S.H.* XXIII.32, in which Isis tells her son Horus to attend to "the secret theory which my ancestor Kamephis learned from Hermes, who noted down all these deeds." Although Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 137–44, and Zielinski (1905), pp. 356–8, take *Kamēphis* to be the same as *Khnum* or *Knēph* whom Philo of Byblos (in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.10.48) identified with Agathodaimon, Festugière doubts the connection; however, he uses the letter that Syncellus ascribed to Manetho on "stelae in the land of Seiria … inscribed in the sacred tongue in hieroglyphic letters by Thoth, the first Hermes, and translated after the flood from the sacred tongue into the Greek language … and set down in books by the son of Agathodaimon, the second Hermes, father of Tat." Referring also to *Asclep*. 37 and Augustine, *City of God* 18.39, Festugière makes this pseudonymous report the basis of a genealogy wherein an elder Hermes fathers Agathodaimon, who is the father of the younger Hermes, called Trismegistus, who in turn is the father of Tat. Note that the translation in Waddell, *Manetho*, p. 209, makes the genealogy different; see *ibid*., p. 15, for Agathodaimon's place – after Hephaistos (Ptah) and Helios (Re) – in Manetho's list of Egypt's first divine kings.

Cyril ascribes a *Logos* to Agathodaimon, but Festugière notes that *C.H.* XII. 1, 8, 9 and 13 attribute no writings to him, although alchemical writings circulated under his name. In classical Greece, Agathos Daimon had only a domestic cult involving luck, prosperity and fertility. He was associated with a number of better defined deities, including Zeus, Dionysus, Hermes, Trophonios, the Dioscuri and, in later times, the more diffuse figure of Agathe Tyche or Good Fortune. In his earliest physical representations, Agathodaimon is an old, bearded man with a scepter in his right hand and a horn of plenty in the left; later he appears as a man-headed snake. In Egypt as in Greece he was often manifest as a snake, and in Alexandria especially a civic cult honored him in that form as founder and protector. In addition to Kamephis, Kneph and Khnum, other gods linked with him in Egypt were Amon, Thoth, Isis, Horus, Psais, Sokonopis

and Sarapis. In the end, he remains a dim and, to say the least, versatile figure, more a functional than a personal force – serving lucky, agrarian, chthonic, protective functions especially. The same name, *Agathos daimõn*, could also refer to the spirit of an individual or a place, and some scholars believe that some such depersonalized power may be the "good demon" of section 23, but Festugière concludes that this "good demon" is the same as the individual deity in *C.H.* XII. See: NF I, 134, n. 73; 135, n. 78; FR I, 85; Scott II, 278–82, III, 491–3; Ganschinietz, PW Suppl. Ill, cols. 37–60; Nock (1928b), p. 556; Carcopino, *Rome*, pp. 249–50, 269–70; Guthrie, *Gods*, pp. 273–7; Rose, *Religion*, pp. 80–2; Fraser, *Alexandria*, I, pp. 207–11, II, pp. 355–9; Dunand (1969), pp. 10–48; Doresse (1972b), pp. 435, 442–3, 447; Hani, *Plutarque*, pp. 409–13; Quaegebeur (1983), pp. 311–12; Ferguson, *Religions*, pp. 77–82; Burkert, *Religion*, p. 180. For other senses of the term, see LSJ s.v. *daimōn*, II.3.

***servile mind*:** NF I, 125, 135, n. 79, has "intellect serviteur" for *nous hupēretikos*; on the latter term, see above, section 17.

X.24 ***can … accomplish anything*:** As Scott (II, 282) and Festugière (NF I, 135, n. 80) point out, the quotation is from the *Elegies* of Theognis, a passage (1.177–8) on poverty, translated as follows by Dorothea Wender (Penguin, 1973, p. 102):

> The man who has
> Poverty for a jailer cannot speak
> Or act as he would wish; his tongue is chained.

***held down and smothered*:** NF I, 135, n. 82.

X.24–5 ***godlike … immortal human***: NF I, 136, nn. 83–5; Scott II, 277, 283–5; *Asclep*. 5–6.

X.25 ***heavenly gods*:** This passage is evidence of "astral mysticism" in the *Hermetica*, according to Nock (1939), p. 500.

***human rises … without leaving*:** On the relation of this passage to *C.H.* IV.4–5, John 1:51 and Jewish sources, see J.Z. Smith, *Map*, p. 59; FR I, 315–17, refers to *C.H.* XI.19–20 and to Philo, *On Special Laws* 2.12.44–5; *On Dreams* 1.10.54.

XI
Mind to Hermes

Title ***Mind*:** Cyril of Alexandria (*Against Julian* 580B in Scott IV, 211) cited the last paragraph of this treatise as belonging to a text entitled "Hermes Trismegistus to his Mind." Fowden (*EH*, p. 33) believes that the *Nous* who addresses Hermes here is actually Poimandres, and Festugière (NF I, 143, n. 1) notes that Mind appears as an interlocutor only here and in *C.H.* I. Scott II, 291–2, thinks that *Nous* replaced Agathodaimon or Khnum. See above, note on *C.H.* I.Title; Scott IVF, 379.

XI.1 ***Since … occurs to me*:** In the manuscripts, the third sentence of section 1 as given here and in NF I, 147, n. 1 ("Mark … occurs to me") precedes the first two sentences ("Since … reveal it"); cf. Scott II, 286–7, who attributes the confusion to a clumsy amalgamation of two separate treatises, which he divides at section 6, "Through me."

XI.2 ***Hear how*:** Nock, following Scott, excises *ho chronos* before "hear" (*akoue*); NF I, 147.

***God … time*, *becoming*:** Mahé, *Hermès* II, 311–12, interprets these five words as a heading introducing a series of "sentences" that comprise sections 2–4, as in *A.D.* 1.1. Following Patrizi, Nock (NF I, 147) inserts the definite article (*ho*) before "god" (*theos*).

The word "eternity" (*aiōn*) occurs thirty times in the Greek treatises, twenty-seven times in *C.H.* XI; the others are in XII.8, 15 and XIII. 20. The Latin equivalent, *aeternitas*, can be found twenty-five times in the *Asclepius*. Festugière (NF I, 146, n. 2, 155, n. 4, 157, n. 8; FR IV, 153, 161–2, 175, 199; [1949a], pp. 254–71) distinguishes temporal and spatial, static and dynamic, personal and impersonal senses of *aiōn*, translating it variously as *Eternité* to signify a hypostasized divine power (XI.2–5), *éternité or éternelle durée* to represent the abstract philosophical sense (XI.7, XII. 15), and *Aiōn* (XI.20, XII.8, XIII. 20) to mean a particular Hellenistic god (described in Scott II, 290–3, III, 188–9; Cumont, *Mithra*, pp. 104–10, 144–5, 223; Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*, pp. 53–4; Nock [1934],

pp. 377–8, 382–96). Aion, as the supreme god of Mithraism, resembles the Persian *Zrvan akarana*, boundless time; in theological terms he became *Kronos* and *Saturnus*, in philosophical terms the Stoic *heimarmenē*. But Zervan was never precisely identified with Aion, according to Nock, who distinguishes various meanings of the word *aiōn*, which he calls "a term of fluid sense": in classical philosophy, the idea of eternity; in Hellenistic thought, a supreme or lesser god, such as Helios; a Greek rendering of the Phoenician Baal Shamin, "lord of eternity"; a personalized power or hypostasis in Christian and Gnostic literature; a deity of Alexandria identified with Agathodaimon. In one place a magical text (*PGM* IV.3168 [Betz, p. 94]) addresses Aion as "holy Agathos Daimon," on which identification see also Reitzenstein, *Erlösungsmysterium*, pp. 188–94; elsewhere the same papyrus (1205 [Betz, p. 61]) calls Aion "Wisdom" or (520 [Betz, p. 48]) "immortal Aion … master of the fiery diadems"; cf. "the invariable Aion" (V.467 [Betz, p. 110]). Commenting on the doctrine of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, Lewy (*Oracles*, pp. 99–105, 140–4, 152–7, 401–9) writes that "the Chaldaean Aion is not only a divinity, but also a noetic hypostasis." For Aion in the Orphic literature, see West, *Orphic Poems*, pp. 219–20, 230–1.

In statuary, he was represented as a naked, lion-headed man bearing four wings on his back, carrying keys and a scepter in his hands, and encircled six times by a serpent whose head appears atop the lion-head. Figures of Aion are sometimes ringed by the zodiac, reflecting Mithraic interest in the soul's voyage through the heavens. For *aiōn* and the Hebrew *'ōlam*, see: Dodds, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 144–5; Scott III, 188; see also Peters, *Terms*, pp. 7–8; Bousset (1919), pp. 192–230; Festugière (1951a), pp. 201–9; Derchain (1969), pp. 31–4; Barb (1971), pp. 162–3; Mastandrea, *Labeo*, pp. 32–4; *TDNT* I, 197–8, 207–8; and notes on *C.H.* I.1; VI. 1, 4. *Zostrianos*, a text early enough to have been known to Plotinus, contains a rich description of the aeons in a Gnostic myth: Layton, *GS*, pp. 130–8. Festugière acknowledges (NF I, 146, n. 2, 157, n. 8) the interpenetration of the meanings of *aiōn* and the consequent difficulties of translating the word, to which he devotes two full chapters (FR IV, 152–99) of his *Révélation*.

***god is … wisdom*:** Before "wisdom" (*hē sophia*) the manuscripts have three other nouns, *to agathon*, *to kalon*, *hē eudaimonia* ("the good, the beautiful, happiness"), omitted in NF I, 147 (following Zielinski; cf. FR

IV, 152–3, n. 7) as a corruption from the phrase near the end of section 3. Sophia, as a personal being, was a central character in many Gnostic mythologies, especially in the system of Valentinus (*c*. 100–*c*. 175 CE). In *Against Heresies* (*c*. 180 CE), Irenaeus of Lyon reported on the intricate system of Ptolemy, a follower of Valentinus, who described Mind's production of a Pleroma of thirty Aeons comprising an Ogdoad, a Decad and a Dodecad (below, *C.H.* XIII.9). Wisdom's reckless passion, originating in a desire for her parent, gave birth to Achamoth, a lower Wisdom, who, unlike her higher counterpart, acted beyond the boundary separating the pleroma from the lower creation. The Gnostic Sophia has much in common with the *hoḵmah* of Hellenistic Judaism (e.g., Prov. 9:1–6), who is also a heavenly person. See Layton, *GS*, pp. 282–90; *TDNT* VII, 499, 509–14; Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*, pp. 179–83; *C.H.* III.l; XIII.2; *S.H.* XXIII.29.

***recurrence and counter-recurrence*:** Above, note on *C.H.* 1.17, "a cycle ended." Scott II, 294–5, thinks that *antapokatastasis* ("counterrecurrence") refers to an earthly form of recurrence (*apokatastasis)* necessarily weaker than the perfect cycles of heaven; he suggests "renewal of things by substitution," as does LSJ s.v. *antapokatastasis*. Festugière (NF I, 90, n. 17,155–7, n. 6) reads both words as astrological terms of art. If *apokatastasis* is a star's cyclic return to its position at the moment of birth (of a person, a nation, an age), *antapokatastasis* is the diametrically opposed position. Since the conjunction of all the planets in Cancer signaled the moment of *ekpurōsis*, the fiery cosmic *apokatastasis*, the *antapokatastasis* was their conjunction in Capricorn, heralding destruction by water.

***quality ⟨and quantity⟩*:** NF I, 148, following Scott, inserts *kaiposotēs* ("and quantity").

***while … god's presence*:** NF I, 148, has "autour de" for *peri* ("in … presence"), but cf. p. 157, n. 6, and FR IV, 153; Scott II, p. 296, recalls *pros* in John 1:1; cf. *TDNT* VI, 56. *PGM* IV. 1125–6 (Betz, p. 60) addresses the god as "beginning and end of the immovable nature"; Bousset (1919), pp. 207–8.

XI.3 ***never come into being*:** NF I, 157, n. 7, points out the contradiction of *C.H.* X.10.

***establishes an order*:** The verb is *kosmei* (see above, note on *C.H.* IV. 1–2; Scott IVF, 379–80), for which NF I, 148, has "fait du monde un ordre."

XI.4 ***god is the soul*:** A definite article (*hē*) is omitted editorially before "soul" (*psuchē*) in NF I, 148, following Reitzenstein; cf. *A.D.* 2.2; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 365.

XI.5 ***necessity … nature*:** NF I, 157–8, n. 14, refers to *C.H.* I.19, XII.14, *S.H.* VIII, XII–XIX; see also *C.H.* XII.21; *Asclep.* 39–40; Long, *Hellenistic*, pp. 148, 163–70.

***maker of … do ⟨but⟩ make*:** NF I, 149, following Turnebus, adds "and" (*kai*) before "change," reads *poiētēs* ("maker") for *poiotētos* ("quality"), and inserts the word corresponding to "but" (*ē*) before "make" (*poiēseien*).

XI.6 ***exist by his agency*:** NF I, 149, 158, n. 19, has "sont soumis à lui."

***Through me*:** At this point, Scott I, 210, IVF, 380–1, divides the treatise in two, preceding it with a few lines transposed from section 1, and Ferguson identifies the topic as "praise of the beauty of the Cosmos…. The theme in what follows *taxis*, *diamonē*, *metabolē*," i.e., arrangement, stability, change.

XI.7 ***seven worlds spread*:** For *hepta kosmous* Festugière (NF I, 150, 158–9, n. 21; FR IV, 156; cf. Scott II, 307) has "sept cieux," i.e., the celestial spheres; see above, *C.H.* V.5, for another vision of the cosmos.

***full of … fire*:** For the *plērōma* of light, see above, *C.H.* I.4, VI.4; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 36. Scott II, 307–8, thinks that the absence of fire can only refer to the sublunary region, where fire becomes light in moving through the air; NF I, 159, n. 23, has no better solution; cf. *C.H.* X.18, XI.19.

combining among things; See above, note on *C.H.* III.4.

***ruler and commander*:** *archontos kai hēgemonos* is Nock's correction (NF I, 150), following Turnebus, of *archōn kai hēgemōn;* Scott (II, 308–9) and Festugière (p. 159, n. 24) identify this ruling god as the sun; cf. *C.H.* I.25, XVI.5–10, *S.H.* XXI.2.

***moon … instrument*:** For the moon as nature's instrument of growth and decline, see *C.H.* I.25; *Asclep.* 3; Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis* 4.1.1–9; Scott II, 309–10; NF I, 159–60, n. 25.

***nurse … like sediment*:** Festugière has "comme fondement," certainly the versio facilior, but see LSJ s.v. *hupostathmē*, with references to Plato, *Phaedo* 109C and Hippocrates, *On Regimen* 2.45; in the latter text *hupostathmē trophēs* means something like "excrement"; note also that "nurse who feeds" renders *trophon*\ cf. Sleeman and Pollet s.v. *hupostathmē*; *A.D.* 2.3; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 365.

XI.9 ***two makers*:** Scott II, 245–6 (cf. NF I, 147) believes that Michael Psellus had this passage in mind in his *Dialogue on the Activities of Demons* 828b; see above, *C.H.* I.9, for a contrary view of the Demiurge as Second God; and below, section 14, XIV.7–8, for positions closer to the text at hand.

XI.10 ⟨***reasoning and*⟩ *unreasoning*:** The first two words correspond to an editorial addition (*tou logikou kai*) in NF I, 151, following Scott.

***causes all life*:** Reading *pasēs* ("all") for *pas* with Tiedemann; NF I, 151, 161, n. 32.

***mortal … from the* {*immortals*}:** Reading with Tiedemann *athanatōn* ("immortals") for *thnētōn* ("mortals"), marked unintelligible in NF I, 151, 161, n. 33.

XI.11 {***How entirely absurd***}**:** NF I, 151, 161, n. 35, obelizes the word (*geloiotaton*) translated here; Ferguson calls it a Christian gloss, and Festugière has "C'est chose tout à fait risible!" See below, section 12; cf. Scott II, 316.

***you have agreed*:** NF I, 151, following Turnebus, reads *hōmologēsas* for *hōmologēsen*.

***to number*:** For *poston einai* NF I, 151, has "soit membre d'une série," a more literal rendering; *poston* is an interrogative adjective meaning "which in the ordinal series"; "among them" is not in the Greek.

XI.12 {***In a god … absurdity***}**:** A guess at the meaning of three words (*en pollō geloiotaton*) obelized and untranslated in NF I, 151; as in section

11, above, this may be a gloss.

***not right*:** The English words are weaker than *mē themis*; "blasphemous" would be strong enough, but its religious associations seem wrong.

XI.13 ***⟨you⟩ can ⟨not⟩ … something*:** NF I, 152, inserts three words: "you" (*se*), "making" (*poiounta*) and the negative in "cannot" (*mē*).

***though it*:** NF I, 152, following Scott, writes *ho* ("it") for *ei*.

***not right*:** Above, section 12.

XI.15 ***Eternity … of their union*:** Of these three sentences in section 15, the first two come at the beginning of a new paragraph in NF I, 153, but in FR IV, 158, Festugière suggests moving them to their position here and beginning the new paragraph at "Death is not the destruction," which in NF begins the last sentence of section 14. Nock (153) records Reitzenstein's view that the last phrase of section 14 as given here ("life is … mind and soul") may be a gloss; see also C.H. I. 6; NF I, 162, n. 45. For *eikōn* ("image") Festugière has "image" in NF I, 153, but in FR IV, 156, he has "copie." In Hellenistic philosophy and religion, *eikōn* frequently expressed an optimistic interpretation of Plato's view (cf. *Timaeus* 92) of the relation between the sensible and the intelligible, as in this passage and in C.H. VIII.2; *TDNT* II, 389.

{Hear me devoutly} … means dissolved : Even if we read *deisidaimonōs akoue* ("hear devoutly") with FR IV, 156–7, n. 4, for *deisidaimōn hōs akoueis*, marked unintelligible in NF I, 153, the translation remains problematic; Nock inserts a particle, *de* ("but"), near the end of the sentence; cf. *TDNT* II, 20. Once again, the difficulty is probably due to a gloss, perhaps a Christian exclaiming "how superstitious you sound!"

***swirling … renewal* :** See below, section 19; Nock obelizes *strophē* ("return"), for which Festugière has "révolution"; NF II, 153, 162–3, n. 49.

XI.16 ***cosmos is omniform* :** Scott II, 321, points out that *pantomorphos* ("omniform") in *Asclep*. 19 (cf. *C.H.* XIII.12, XVI.12; *Asclep*. 35) is a god, the divine zodiac, though no such astronomical associations arise here; cf. NF I, 215, n. 55; see also *A.D.* 10.2; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 397.

***changes … within itself* :** NF I, 163, n. 50; cf. p. 153.

formless … one form **:** Scott II, 322–3, cites Plato's critique (*Republic* 380–3) of the mythological accounts of divine metamorphosis that change the god's *eidos* into *morphai*; he also points out that *amorphos* can mean "misshapen" or "ugly."

XI.16–17 ***any structure … out high*** **:** The Greek word corresponding to "structure" is *idea*, for which NF I, 153, 163, n. 51, 167, has "figure." Variants on "form" in the sentences preceding correspond to *morphē* and its cognates; see *Asclep*. 2 and Scott II, 323, who treats *idea* and *morphē* as synonyms here; see also Scott IVF, 383.

XI.18 ***in a place*****:** *C.H*. II.1–12; NF I, 163, nn. 53–5; Scott II, 325.

XI.19 ***to India*****:** NF I, 154, adopts Patrizi's ingenious emendation of *eis hēn de kai* to *eis Indikēn* ; above, *C.H*. X.25.

nor the swirl**:** For *dinē* ("swirl") and *dinēsis* ("swirling"), here and in section 15, as cosmological terms from the pre-Socratics onward, see NF I, 162–3, n. 49; 164, n. 56; Scott II, 326–7.

break through the universe: Scott II, 327, refers to *C.H*. 1.13; see also: 1.25-6; XIII.11, 15, 20; *NHC* VI.6.63.10-14; Keizer, *Discourse*, pp. 16-17.

XI.20 ***himself, ⟨the⟩ universe*****:** NF I, 155, following Scott, inserts the definite article (*to*) before "universe" (*holon*).

by like**:** NF I, 155, following Angelo Vergezio, corrects *tōn homoiōn* to *tō homoiō*; see Scott IVF, 383, on the context of *sumpatheia* and *sungeneia*.

outleap … outstrip**:** See Dodds, *Anxiety*, pp. 82–4, who compares sections 20–1 with Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.1.2.

become eternity**:** The advice here, probably, is to become a particular god, Aion, for whom see above, note on section 2, and NF I, 164–5, n. 58, which refers to *PGM* IV.475–750 (Betz, pp. 48–52), the so-called "Mithras Liturgy," for another apotheosis involving Aion. On the general theme of human grandeur, see *Asclep*. 6. See also: *PGM* I.200–4, IV.1167–1226, V.459–89, XIII.65–85, 297–340, 580–635 (Betz, pp. 8, 61, 109–10, 174, 180–1, 187); *A.D*. 8.7; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 389; Bousset (1919), pp.

196–200, 211; Scott IVF, 383–4; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 279; *HMR*, pp. 197–8, 374.

***Go higher*:** The correction of *hupsēlotatos* ("highest") to *hupsēloteros* ("higher") is in NF I, 155, following Turnebus.

***be everywhere … beyond death*:** NF I, 165, n. 60, cites examples of "ecstatic experience," including: Plotinus, *Ennead* 4.8.1; 6.5.7, 12; Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 23; *Chaldaean Oracles* 110–28 (Des Places, pp. 94–7); Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 1.12, 3.4–6 (40.16–42.17, 109.4–114.2); *PGM* IV.154–285, 475–829 (Betz, pp. 40–3, 48–54), and C.H. I, X.24–5, XIII. 11 ; see also Scott II, 328–33; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 184–211; Festugière, *Religion*, pp. 135–6.

XI.21 ***I fear … with god*:** *A.D.* 9.3; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 391; Scott IVF, 384; Reitzenstein *HMR*, pp. 307–8, 374–5.

***evil … lover*:** Above, *C.H.* I.18–19.

***ignorant … ultimate vice*:** Above, C.H. X.8–9.

***{straight and} easy way*:** Excising *idia* (with Scott I, 22; II, 335) after *eutheia* ("straight"); NF I, 156, obelizes both words, translating "la voie directe … et une voie facile."

***journey, the good*:** NF I,156,166, n. 63a, leaves the subject indefinite, pointing out that the reference could be to "the good" or "the divine" or "god" from the preceding sentences, and suggesting that the previous sentence might end after "you journey" (*hodeonti soi*) rather than "easy"(*rahdia*); for other "journey" words, see above, *C.H.* I.26–7.

XI.22 ***And do you say*:** Aubert, the seventeenth-century editor of Cyril of Alexandria, provided this emendation of *eita phusin* in Cyril (above, note on Title) to *eita phēs* the manuscripts of the Corpus have *eikoni taphēs*; NF I, 156.

***his excellence*:** For *aretē* ("excellence") Festugière (NF I, 156) has "le pouvoir miraculeux," but see p. 166, n. 66.

***nothing is unseen*:** NF I, 157, following Scott I, 222, II, 335, emends *horaton* ("seen") to *aoraton* ("unseen").

***Up to … deceived*:** Of these concluding words, Zielinski (1905), pp. 350–5, writes that "in the end they emphatically repeat the words of the Poimandres-text [i.e., *C.H.* XIII. 15] in order thereby to recommend to the

Poimandres-community the newest, Gnostic-pantheist revision of Hermetism." He also interprets *C.H.* XII.8 as polemic against these two passages. See also: NF I, 166, n. 68; Scott II, 336.

XII
Discourse of Hermes Trismegistus: On the mind shared in common, to Tat

Title NF I, 174, has "Sur l'intellect commun" for *peri nou koinou*, which Scott II, 338, finds unintelligible. For connections among *C.H.* X, XI, XII and XIII, see Zielinski (1905), pp. 350–6 and NF I, 171–3, and for the division of XII into two parts after "surrounds matter" in section 14, see Scott II, 336, and NF I,173,188, n. 38, where Festugière concludes that "given the rather loose composition of the Hermetic writings, it is arbitrary to cut … XII into two distinct treatises."

XII.1 ***what that essence*:** Reading *auto* ("that essence"; literally "it") for *auton* with Einarson; Festugière (NF I, 174, n. 1) translates the latter reading as "se connaître," the former as "le savoir." He also points out that the conditional attribution of essence to a god also appears as a safeguard in C.H. VI.4, and Scott II, 339, explains that the writer may have feared confusing the divine immaterial *ousia* with the Stoic materialist sense of the term.

***has expanded*:** For the verb, *haploō*, see Sleeman and Pollet, s.v. *haploun*; cf. NF I, 174, n. la, which has "se déploie," and Dodd (*Fourth Gospel*, p. 25), who has "evolved"; Scott II, 339, suggests "unfolded," "spread abroad," "diffused."

***their humanity*:** NF I, 174, following Foix de Candale, reads *autōn* ("their") for *autou*.

***good demon … mortal gods*:** The reference is to C.H. X.25; for the "good demon," see also X.23, and below, sections 8, 9, 13; NF I, 171, n. 1; Keizer, *Discourse*, p. 56.

***immortal (humans)*:** The word "humans" (*anthrōpous*) is Nock's insertion from a scribal note; NF I, 174; above, *C.H.* I.12, on *anthrōpos*.
***there is natural*:** Dodd (*Fourth Gospel*, p. 25) has "mind is nature," and NF I, 174, has "l'intellect est l'instinct naturel," but cf. p. 178, n. 3; Scott II, 340–1; *TDNT* IX, 253–5, 259–60, 277.

XII.2 ***Mind is … benefactor:*** Mahé (1984), p. 56, compares *V.F.* A.8.
***immersed*:** This word translates *baptizetai;* for its use in this negative context, see Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 276–8; cf. *C.H.* IV.4.

XII.3 ***predilections … overtaken:*** For the word-play (*prolēmmasin ... proeilēmmenon*) "preempted" would be better than "overtaken"; NF I, 181–2, n. 6; Scott II, 342.
***a good physician*:** For this medical simile, see FR III, 116, nn. 3–5; cf. NF I, 181–3, nn. 6–7; Scott II, 342; see also Plato, *Gorgias* 477E-81B, 521E.
***mere opinion … them*:** For positive and negative meanings of *doxa* ("opinion," "glory"), see above, note on C.H. X.8; NF I, 175, 183, n. 9, suggests another possible sense, "vainglory" or *kenodoxia*, and emends *eis* in the manuscripts to *hais* ("them").

XII.4 ***are affected in*:** For *paschō*, *pathos* and their cognates, translated in this treatise (sections 4–8, 10–11) as "affect" and "passion," see above, note on C.H. VI.2.
***When mind … unreason*:** Either something has dropped out of this passage or it needs emendation, according to NF I, 175; cf. Scott II, 343.
***imposed the law … torment*:** Dodd (*Bible*, p. 242) and NF I, 183–4, n. 11, agree that this conception of law is not necessarily biblical; cf. *C.H.* I.23, XIII.7.

XII.5 ***how … when he*:** NF I, 176, omits a conjunction (*ē*) in this phrase; for answers to the question, see NF I, 184, n. 12, 193–5, where Festugière devotes a long appendix to the problem of fate in paragraphs 5–9; cf. *C.H.* I.9; *Asclep*. 19, 39–40; Scott II, 344–50; and Layton, *GS*, pp. 95–6, who translates a striking Gnostic example of fear of astrological fate from the *First Thought in Three Forms (NHC* XIII. 1)

XII.6 ***not … for a discourse*:** Tiedemann's correction of *ho* is the negative *ou*, adopted in NF I, 176, which, following Scott, also adds the definite article (*ho*) before "discourse."

***topics elsewhere*:** The word "fate"(*heimarmenē*) occurs ten times in paragraphs 5–9, five times elsewhere in the Greek treatises (*C.H.* I.9, 15, 19; XVI.11, 16) and eight times in the *Asclepius* (19, 39–40); *anankē* ("necessity") also occurs frequently, but not always with reference to fate; cf. NF I, 184, n. 14, citing *S.H.* VIII.5, and Scott II, 344.

***admits of differences*:** Literally, "containing differences"; this is LSJ's rendering of *endiaphoros*, which Cumont (NF I, 184, n. 15) identifies as a technical term in the astrologer Vettius Valens, *Anthology* 2.34.1, 4.11.66; cf. Scott II, 345–6.

***As it quells … without it*:** NF I, 169, n. 1, 176, 184–5, nn. 16–7, calls the text corrupt at this point; Nock's apparatus records the heavy emendations proposed by Scott (II, 346) and Einarson. My translation is close to Festugière's except that he writes "hommes en possession du verbe" where I have "men who possess reason." The rare word in question, *ellogimos*, occurs in the *Hermetica* only here and in the next paragraph; it can mean "held in high regard" or "eloquent," but in this passage it is close to *pneumatikos* and opposed to *alogos*, "unreasoning," literally, without *logos*, but here equivalent to *psuchikos*; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, p. 415; *C.H.* I.5. Festugière uses *verbe* to preserve the opposition between lower "men of reason" (above, notes on *C.H.* IV.3–4) and the higher men who possess mind.

***men who possess*:** Here "men" is *andras*, denoting the male gender, but "humans" and "people" in this section represent *anthrōpos*, on which see above, *C.H.* I.12.

***birth and change*:** NF I, 185, n. 18, agrees with Scott II, 346–7, that "change" (*metabolē*) is a euphemism for "death" here, but Festugière translates "changement."

XII.7 ***freed … not affected*:** NF I, 185, n. 19, and Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 233–8, cite examples of Gnostic antinomianism, as in Irenaeus' account (*Against Heresies* 1.6.2; Layton, GS, p. 294) of Ptolemy's ethics: "they say that … good behavior is necessary for us Christians … but … that they are spirituals not by behavior but by nature."

XII.8 ***good demon … in writing*:** Following Reitzenstein (*Poimandres*, pp. 126–8) and NF I, 111, Mahé(*Hermès* I, 6, II, 307–10; [1976], p. 213) sees these words as an allusion to a Hermetic gnomology, *The Sayings of Agathodemon*, on whom see above, note on C.H. X.23; cf. W. Kroll, PW VIII/1, cols. 800–1. Zielinski (1905), pp. 350–5, notes that the assumption of an oral tradition seems to be contradicted by C.H. XIII.15; see also XI.22; FR II, 8, 42. Mahé also believes that the Hermetic writings originated for the most part from loose collections of sayings (*logia*) or sentences (*gnōmai*) which gradually acquired a matrix of commentary, producing in the end a treatise like C.H. XVI.

***the firstborn god*:** Scott II, 348–9, referring to S.H. XXIII.32, explains that the good demon as Khnum (above, note on C.H. X.23) was called "firstborn" – though this was properly an epithet of the god Turn – as was the Orphic deity Phanes; West, *Orphic Poems*, pp. 103–7, 202–12.

***at any rate*:** Rose (1947), p. 103, sees difficulty in the meaning of the particle *goun* ("at any rate") in relation to the particle *dio* ("thus") that opens section 8.

***all things are one*:** Scott II, 349–50, thinks that the words identified here as sayings of Agathodaimon are without meaning as they stand; NF I, 185, n. 20, refers to C.H. XIII.17–18 and XVI.3; cf. Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 248–9.

***⟨the⟩ intellectual bodies*:** NF I, 177, translates *noēta sōmata* as "êtres intelligibles"; the definite article (*ta*) is an editorial addition from a scribal correction.

***and in eternity*:** On eternity as a god, Aion, see above, notes on *C.H.* XI.2, 20.

***good as well*:** According to NF I, 185–6, n. 21, the sayings of Agathodaimon stop at this point.

XII.9 ***fate* [⟨and⟩ *mind*]:** NF I, 177, 186, n. 23, proposes the insertion of *kai* ("and") before *tou nou* ("mind"), which was excised by earlier editors; on *gnōsis* as proof against fate, see Reitzenstein, *HMR*, p. 382; Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, pp. 243–4.

***setting … setting*:** In both places *theinai* ("setting") is Foix de Candale's emendation, adopted in NF I, 177. For the superiority of mind to fate, see

NF I, 186, n. 25, 193–5; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 203–5; and especially the text of Zosimus given in Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 102–6, and translated in FR I, 263–73; for a recent edition and translation of Zosimus, see Jackson, *Zosimos*, pp. 16–37.

***Divinely said*:** Below, section 12, "delivered," and *C.H.* I.32 on *paradosis*.

XII.10 ***defiling contact:*** NF I, 178, 187, n. 27, following Parthey, corrects *sunchrēmatizōn* (from *sunchrēmatizō*, "to be associated with") to *sunchrōtizōn*, for which see also above, *C.H.* X.17.

XII.11 ***All embodied … auspicious name:*** Of this section and the beginning of the next, Festugière (NF I, 187, n. 28) writes, "I despair of understanding … what Tat finds 'perfectly clear'"; cf. Scott II, 351–3, who calls it "obscure in the extreme." The phrase "but (not) everything" follows Ferguson's insertion of *ou* after *asōmaton* ("incorporeal"). Nock (NF I, 178) suggests that *nous* is the implied subject of the sentence "If there … release from passion."

XII.12 ***delivered*:** Above, section 9.

***to mankind … reasoned speech*:** Mahé (1984), p. 55, compares *V.F.* A, referring for clarification and contrast also to *C.H.* I.22, IV.4–5; *Asclep.* 6, 22, 41; *A.D.* 4.2; *NHC* VI.7.64.8–10, VI.8.66.31–3.

[*Mankind … he utters*]: Several editors have removed these words, which Festugière (NF I, 187, n. 31; Scott IVF, 385) attributes to a glossator who mistook the *logos* of sections 12–14 for the Stoic *logos endiathetos*, "reason conceived," as opposed to *logosprophorikos*, "reason uttered." Festugière believes that the two correct senses of *logos* here are the "intelligent speech or expression" which is common to all people, and the "mystical" *logos* that leads to immortality; all share the latter gift, but not all make use of it. Scott II, 353–4, agrees that the words are a gloss, but he thinks that they interpret the passage correctly. See above, *C.H.* I.6, VIII.1.

***If one … the blessed*:** Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 156–7, refers to *PGM* III.595–601 (Betz, pp. 33–4); see also *HMR*, p. 367; Cumont, *Lux*, p. 301.

XII.13 ***demon has said*:** Above, section 8.

XII.14 ***as the body … of the soul*:** A gloss, according to NF I, 188, n. 35.
***surrounds matter**:* Above, note on Title, for the suggestion that a new treatise or a second part of the same treatise begins here; Scott I, 232.
***Necessity … nature*:** Below, section 21; above, C.H. I.19, XI.5; NF I, 188, n. 38; Scott II, 358–9.
***composite bodies*:** NF I, 180, following Turnebus, inserts the definite article (*ta*) before *suntheta sōmata* ("composite bodies"). On the meaning of this difficult sentence, see NF I, 188–9, nn. 39–40; Scott II, 359–60.

XII.15 ***a number belonging:*** NF I, 189, n. 41, points out that the "number" (*arithmos*) must be greater than one; composition entails multiplicity, at least duality; cf. Scott II, 360–1.
***The henads … dissolved*:** In *Philebus* 15A, Plato uses "henads" or "unities" (*henades*) to mean "examples of ones," and in 15B "monads" has the same meaning. Plotinus (*Enn*. 6.6.9.33–4) treats both "henads" and "numbers" as meaning "forms." Later Neoplatonists, especially Proclus, elaborated a complex theology of divine henads. See: Dodds, *Elements*, pp. 257–60; C.H. IV.10–11, XIII.12. NF I, 180, following Scott, corrects *dialuomenai* to *dialuomenon* ("dissolved").
***plenitude … whole recurrence*:** Above, notes on C.H. I.17, VI.4, XI.2.

XII.16 ***god be destroyed*:** NF I, 180, following Parthey, corrects *apolesai* to *apolesthai* ("be destroyed").
***terminology of becoming*:** Einarson in NF I, 189–90, n. 49, and C.H. VIII.1.

XII.17 ***nurse of all*:** For the earth as nurse, see NF I, 190, n. 50; Plato, *Statesman* 274A; above, note on C.H. XI.7.
***cannot beget*:** NF I, 181, following Turnebus, writes *phuein* ("beget") for *phuēnai*, *phanai* and similar manuscript readings.
***fourth part is idle*:** As one of the four elements, earth constitutes the fourth part of elementary nature; see C.H. XI.5; Scott II, 362; NF I, 190, nn. 51–2.

XII.18 ***change is … not death*:** For "change" (*metabolē*) as a euphemism for death, see above, note on section 6; *C.H.* VIII.4; NF I, 190, n. 54.
***immortal … spirit*:** Above, C.H. I.5, X.16.

XII.19 ***fit to keep … converse*:** NF I, 181, has "capable … d'entrer en union avec" for *sunousiastikos*; Scott I, 235, writes "can … hold intercourse"; cf. *A.D.* 9.6; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 395; *Asclep.* 6.
***inspiration … oak tree*:** The word "inspiration" renders *pneumatos* (above, note on *C.H.* I. 5; Fontenrose, *Oracle*, pp. 196–201, 224–6), and "oak tree" is *druos*; on the oracular oak at Dodona and on problems in earlier translations of this passage, see Allen (1980), pp. 205–10; *Platonism*, p. 66; see also Plato, *Phaedrus* 244B, 275B; Homer, *Odyssey* 14.238; Burkert, *Religion*, pp. 114–8; *TDNT* VI, 338, 343–52, 407–9; Scott II, 365–6; Cumont, *Egypte*, pp. 158–63; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 406–11.

XII.20 ***sees heaven … sensing it*:** See *Asclep.* 6, "He looks up to heaven," and the texts cited by Scott II, 366–7.

XII.21 ***order of … this order*:** Another untranslatable pun on *kosmos* and *eukosmia* ("careful arrangement"); *C.H.* IV.1–2.
***heavenly … providence*:** NF I, 182, has "tout ce qui s'offre à notre vue" for *phainomenôn*, but cf. pp. 190–1, n. 62, for the special astronomical significance of the term; above, section 14, for *pronoia* ("providence").
***these are energies*:** For "energies" (*energeiai*) see above, note on *C.H.* X.l; NF I, 191, n. 64; Scott II, 368–9.
***By … ⟨than⟩ god*:** NF I, 182, translates *hupo allou theou* as "Par un autre dieu." My version is based on Scott's insertion of *ētou* after *allou*.
***limbs ⟨of god⟩*:** Some manuscripts have *merē* ("parts") for *melē* ("limbs"); "god" assumes the insertion of *theou* by Turnebus; NF I, 182, 191, n. 66.
***immortality*, {*fate*} … *nature*:** For *haima* ("blood") in the manuscripts, Scott and Ferguson read *heimarmenē* ("fate"); Foix de Candale suggested *pneuma* ("spirit"), and Einarson proposed *harmonia* ("harmony" or "framework"); Festugière leaves a blank. In the New Testament, *haima* is a word of theological significance, as in John 1:13, Acts 17:26. Cf. *C.H.*

XI.5; *Asclep*. 39–40; *TDNT* I, 172–3; NF I, 182, 191, n. 65, 193–5; Scott II, 369, IVF, 386; Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 305.

XII.22 ***not energized … a heap*:** NF I, 183, 191, n. 69, translates *energoumenēn* ("energized") as "mise en œuvre," and suggests "travaillée" and "actualisée" as possible alternatives; cf. above, note on section 21; Scott II, 369–70. Ross (*Aristotle's Metaphysics*, p. 219) explains that "heap" (*sōros*) "is Aristotle's regular example of that which has not organic unity"; in *Metaphysics* Z.16 (1040b5–9), Aristotle contrasts actual substance with the mere potency of animal limbs or elements, which have no independent existence except as heaps of formless matter. Note also the possible pun on *soros*, a funeral urn.

***materiality … essence*:** NF I, 183, 191, n. 71, following Patrizi and a scribal corrector, corrects *hulē energeia* to *hulēs energeian* ("the energy of matter"), inserts the definite article (*tēn*) before "corporeality," emends *hē ousia* to *tēs ousias* ("of essence"), and notes the rarity of the word *hulotēs* ("materiality") as well as Plotinus' treatment of it as a Gnostic neologism in *Ennead* 2.9.10.25–32.

XII.23 ***has any bearing*:** NF I, 183, 191–2, n. 73, points out that *peri*, rendered as "attribué à," is ambiguous, connoting spatiality in the case of *topos* ("place") and the more abstract relation of attribution in the case of *poiotēs* ("quality"); cf. Scott II, 370–1.

***Show this … be evil*:** NF I, 183, has "Verbe" for *logon* ("discourse"), but cf. p. 192, n. 74. Lactantius, who cites these two sentences in Latin in *Divine Institutes* 6.25.10 (Scott II, 371, IV, 19, n. 1, 22, n. 2) has "verbum," but Scott writes that "if the word *logon* occurred at all in the … passage as originally written, it probably meant 'discourse' or 'teaching.'" Nock (1937), p. 463, cites this last sentence as one evidence in the *Hermetica* of "antipathy to popular cultus"; cf. *C.H.* I.31–2, IV.7; *Asclep*. 41.

XIII

A secret dialogue of Hermes Trismegistus on the mountain to his

son Tat: On being born again, and on the promise to be silent

Title For different arrangements of the title, see: Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 2, 62–4, 67, who sees *C.H.* XIII as a dialogue only formally, regarding it as a sort of catechism to which Tat makes no real contribution. FR I, 15, maintains that "there are really people in action here, and the dialogue is not artificial." Scott II, 373–5, identifies the thirteenth treatise as a *diexodikos logos* (above, C.H. X.l) and believes that it is "one of the latest of the extant Hermetica" because of its dependence on C.H. I and XI; cf. Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 48–9, 187, 199–201.

For pagan, Jewish and Christian uses of the mountain (*oros*) as a site of revelation to such figures as Zoroaster, Moses and Hermas ("author" of the *Shepherd* 78.4), see Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 33; *HMR*, p. 377; Zielinski (1905), pp. 323–4, 346–7; NF II, 200–3, n. 1; *PGM* XII.92–6 (Betz, p. 156); *TDNT* V, 475–87. Festugière (NF II, 200) translates *epangelias* ("promise") as "règle," but cf. p. 203, n. 3; section 22 below; *S.H.* VI.l; *NHC* VI.6.52.2; *TDNT* II, 577–9; Mahé (1974b), p. 58; and Scott II, 375.

Dodd (*Bible*, pp. 240–1; *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 44–53) believes that the theme of *palingenesia* ("rebirth" or "being born again," which occurs eleven times in this *logos*, but only once elsewhere [III.3] in the Greek treatises) is no evidence of biblical influence in this dialogue, but he prints a list of twenty-two passages in which he finds "striking parallels" between *C.H.* XIII and the Gospel and first Epistle of John; cf. Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 52, 72–3, who points out that the term *palingenesia* is to be found only once in the New Testament, in Tit. 3:5. Dodd also sees "many points of contact" between the Septuagint and the hymn in sections 17–18, but Mahé (*Hermès* I, 21, 41–4, 53–4, II, 288) proposes Egyptian parallels and emphasizes the similarities between this treatise and *NHC* VI.6 on rebirth and other themes; Keizer, *Discourse*, p. 13, provides a schematic comparison of *NHC* VI.6 to *C.H.* XIII, seeing both as examples of "the mystery liturgy of Hermes Trismegistus." Scott (II, 374) suggests that the "hermetists … probably got this conception either from the Christians … or from some pagan mystery-cult," but Büchsel (*TDNT* I, 686–9) points out that *palingenesia* was a Stoic invention, the opposite of

ekpurōsis (above note on *C.H.* I.17), and that Plutarch, Lucian, Varrò and other writers transferred the reference of the term from the cosmos to the individual; see also Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, pp. 51–5, 258–9. Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 333–7, treats *palingenesia* as one of several terms for religious transformation, and Dodds, *Anxiety*, p. 76, calls the Hermetic rebirth "an actual change of identity, the substitution of a divine for a human personality … either by a magical ritual or by an act of divine grace or by some combination."

Tröger, *Gnosis*, pp. 34–5, 57, emphasizes the common interest of *C.H.* XIII and *PGM* IV.475–829 (Betz, pp. 48–54) in rebirth and apotheosis as goals of a mystery, admitting the sacramental character of *palingenesia* but denying its cultic reality; the same author (1973), pp. 118–19, concludes that there were "small circles" of Hermetists who used the present treatise as the basis of "religious discussions" and "meditation." In *HMR*, pp. 51–2, 64, 242–5, Reitzenstein applied to *C.H.* XIII the famous term *Lesemysterium* or "reading-mystery," by which he meant that "the Hermetic mystery … does not present a mystery in the strict sense of the term, but rather the description of one …. The author … plays the role of the mystagogue … and … hopes that… his presentation will exert upon the reader the same effect as the actual mystery." Although Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 201–2, agrees that "one can even describe it… as a 'Lese-Mysterium,' " he means something different: "Nothing in *C.H.* XIII indicates that the tractate by itself is intended to work regeneration in those who read it. Its purpose is rather to teach…. The liturgical references … serve as reminders for those who have already been initiated. … In reminding the reader of his former regeneration,… *C.H.* XIII creates the understanding that the ceremony should have given." Grese (pp. 50–4) also expresses caution about Tröger's central thesis, that *C.H.* XIII can be characterized as a Gnostic document that makes use of terminology from the mysteries, but see also Sfameni Gasparro (1965), pp. 43–61. Festugière, who devotes most of two chapters of his *Révélation* (IV, 200–67, esp. 210, 216–17, 249; cf. I, 296–7, 303–8, II, 15–16) to "themes of regeneration" in *C.H.* XIII, also notes the significance of initiatory magic for this treatise, especially *PGM* IV.475–732, the "recipe for immortality" that Dieterich called the "Mithras Liturgy"; see also Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 200–2; Meyers, *Liturgy*, pp. 7–10.

XIII.1 ***General Discourses*:** Above, note on Title and *C.H.* X.l; *NHC* VI.6.54.7–18; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 95–6; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 67–71.

***coming down*:** Nock (NF II, 200; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 2–3; cf. Scott II, 375) adopts Reitzenstein's reading of *katabaseōs* ("coming down") for *metabaseōs* ("passage") in the manuscripts; *katabainō* had important cultic and eschatological uses (*TDNT* I, 522–3). Fowden (*EH*, pp. 49, 98), however, renders *orous* as "desert" and keeps *metabaseōs*, giving "coming out of the desert."

***said … deliver it*:** One of two mentions of *paradosis* in this section; see also below, sections 2–3, 15–16; *NHC* VI.6.52.6^7; Mahé (1974b), p. 59.

***you were … to the cosmos*:** Festugière (NF II, 220; FR IV, 200) encloses this phrase in quotation marks because it is Tat's report of a promise made to him by Hermes. The "you" in the quotation marks refers to Tat; see Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 3–4; cf. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 339; W. Kroll, PW VIII/1, p. 804. The verb *apallotrioō* ("estrange" or "alienate") occurs in the New Testament in similar usage (Eph. 2:12, 4:18, Col. 1:21; *TDNT* I, 265), but the themes of exile, estrangement and alienation were central to Gnosticism; the prayer studied by Nock (1934), pp. 364–6, contains the phrase "I made myself a stranger (*allotrion*) to all vice and godlessness"; see also: Layton, GS, pp. 54–60; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 122–6, 199–200, II, pp. 26–9; *Gnostic Religion*, pp. 49–51; Tröger, *Gnosis*, pp. 82–3, 97–9; NF II, 205–6, n. 8; Scott II, 375–6.

***my purpose … of the cosmos*:** Festugière (NF II, 200, 206, n. 9; cf. Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 4–5, 76; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 149) has "j'ai fortifié mon esprit" for *apēndreiōsa to en emoiphronema;* above, *C.H.* I.18–19.

***what I need*:** *NHC* VI.6.54.17; Mahé (1974b), p. 59.

***give me … born again*:** Nock (NF II, 200; cf. Grese, *Early Christian*, p. 4, n. 1) reads *palingenesias* (genitive) and inserts *genesin* after it, which Festugière translates as "le processus de la régénération." But FR IV, 200, n. 3, adopts *palingenesian* (accusative) from other manuscripts, without the addition of *genesin*, suggesting "transmettre la régénération" or "livrer (la formule de) la régénération" as alternatives; Scott II, 376, proposes "cause me to be born again." Fowden (*EH*, pp. 108–9), noting that *palingenesia* occurs frequently in this treatise, also insists on the importance of the theme of rebirth "in all the more initiatory texts." He

understands Hermetic rebirth as "a negation of physical birth" and "a liberation from fate and materiality." See below, note on section 12, and the definition of rebirth in section 13. Several sections (1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 22; cf. 14) of this treatise – like C.H. IV.5, *Asclep*. 41 and *NHC* VI.6.60.1–32 – assume that rebirth can happen to a living mortal, but *C.H*. I.24–6 (like IX.6; S.H. VI. 18) describes an experience accessible only after the death of the body; Tröger, *Gnosis*, pp. 140–1; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 109–10; see also: *PGM* III.599- 600 (Betz, pp. 33–4); NF I, 125–6, n. 27; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 305, 371–2, 453–4.

***mankind was born*:** Note that NF II, 200, 208, n. 12, capitalizes "l'Homme" as in C.H. I; cf. *C.H*. I.12 on *anthrōpos*.

XIII.2 ***child … in silence*:** "The womb" is not in the Greek but is easily inferred from the previous sentence; cf. *PGM* IV.517–18 (Betz, p. 48), in which the subject is "born mortal from mortal womb but transformed"; *Chaldaean Oracles* 30 (Des Places, p. 73), which speaks of a "source of sources, a womb that contains all things," and 16 (Des Places, p. 70) which mentions "the silence of the fathers, from which god feeds himself"; also the beginning of Irenaeus' account (*Against Heresies* 1.1.1; Layton, GS, p. 281) of Ptolemy's Gnostic myth, which describes "a preexistent perfect entity … the deep … uncontained, invisible, everlasting and unengendered … in great stillness and silence. And with it coexisted thought, which they also call loveliness and silence. And … the deep took thought to emit a source of the entirety. And it deposited this emanation … like sperm, in the womb of silence … [which] brought forth intellect." For *sophia noera en sigē*, Festugière (NF II, 200) has "la Sagesse intelligente dans le silence," explaining on p. 208, n. 13, that "*Sigē* here is, I think, a gnostic entity," but in FR III, 168, n. 6, he writes "it was mistaken of me … to see gnostic entities here – Sophia, *Sigē*. The womb is the soul of the initiate himself fitly disposed. … as recommended in XIII.8, he collects his thoughts in silence: here we have the equivalent of I.30." For Silence as divine mother associated with Wisdom, see Pagels, *Gospels*, pp. 50–4. Braun, *Jean*, p. 295, sees correspondences here and elsewhere in *C.H*. XIII to the language of John's Gospel, as above in *C.H*. I.6 and below in *Asclep*. 24, but cf. Festugière (1944), pp. 259–60. Brock (1983), pp. 203–9, notes the appearance of this passage, through section 4, in a Christian Syriac text of the sixth or seventh century. See also: J. Kroll, *Lehren*, p. 8;

Scott II, 376–7; IVF, 387; Festugière, *HMP*, p. 62; NF II, 206, n. 11; FR III, 34; IV, 76–7, 201; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 25, 77–8, 82–5, 110–11, 160–1, 169, 267–8, 296–7, 335, 341–3, 397–8; Troger, *Gnosis*, pp. 154–7; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 5, 79–80; above notes on *C.H.* I.30, XI. 2; *A.D.* V.2; Layton, GS, pp. 31–2, 92, 97–8, 107, 248, 287.

***The will*:** NF II, 208–9, n. 14, refers to *C.H.* I.8, IV.1, V.7; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 28–9; below, note on "when he wishes" in this section.
***my essence* [ ]:** NF II, 201, following Reitzenstein, brackets *kai tés noētēs* ("and mind") after *ousias* ("essence"); Grese, *Early Christian*, p. 6, agrees.
***composed … powers*:** Festugière has "de toutes les Puissances" for *ek pasōn dunameōn* in NF II, 201, but in FR III, 154 and IV, 201 he has "seulement de Puissances"; cf. NF II, 209, n. 15; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 7, 81; Scott I, 241, II, 379, "wholly composed."
***tell me a riddle*:** Cf. *NHC* VI.6.52.22–4; Mahé (1974b), p. 59.
***Such a lineage*:** Following Scott I, 241, Festugière translated *touto to genos* as "cette sorte de chose" in NF II, 201, but in FR IV, 201, n. 1, he suggests "'cette descendance raciale' dont le contexte montre qu'elle est divine"; cf. *TDNT* I, 684–5; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 7–8; Tröger, *Gnosis*, p. 112.
***when he wishes*:** Above, note on "the will" in this section and "the gift" in *C.H.* IV.5.

XIII.3 ***I have*** … ***lineage*** : Scott I, 241, II, 380, and Parthey, *Poemander*, p. 116, read this as a question; NF II, 201, 210, n. 20, makes it a declarative statement, set off in quotation marks. Slightly emended (Scott II, 380), the words scan as a line of verse, in which Festugière sees "a password in reverse"; cf. *C.H.* I.30; *PGM* IV.574–5 (Betz, p. 49): "I am a star, wandering about with you, and shining forth out of the deep." Grese (*Early Christian*, pp. 9, 85–7) gives "I am a foreign son of the father's race" and points out the resemblance to another password in *NHC* V. 3.33, "The First Apocalypse of James."
begrudge*:* NF II, 210, n. 21, refers to *C.H.* IV.3 and *Asclep.* 1.
seeing … unfabricated vision: "Unfabricated" translates *aplaston*, which is "immatérielle" in NF II, 201, but "incréée" in FR IV, 202, "uncreated" in Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 44, and "true" in Grese, *Early Christian*, p. 9.

TDNT, VI, 262, sees the meaning "merely physical" for *plastos* in "dualistic writings" such as *C.H.* XIII and by extension "forged," "fabricated," "invented"; the "feigned words" of II Peter 2:3 are *plastoi*. (*Aplastos* can also be a variant of *aplatos*, "terrible," "monstrous," which – except for the occurrence below of *plastos* ["fabrication"] – might be a reasonable reading in reference to the awful vision of *C.H.* I.) Scott I, 241, has "not fashioned out of matter." After "seeing" (*horōn*) occurs a pronoun (*ti*) that NF II, 201, marks unintelligible, noting that Reitzenstein thought it simply a placeholder for an illegible word.

not what I was: Tröger, *Gnosis*, pp. 103–5, refers to *Acts of Thomas* 15 (Hennecke, NTA_f II, p. 450).

taught … ***here below:*** Literally "and not by this fabricated element through which it is ⟨possible⟩ to see"; cf. Scott II, 380, and Grese, *Early Christian*, p. 9, who has "not even by this fabricated element through which comes sight."

Therefore ... ***no longer:*** NF II, 201, reads *dio kai* ("Therefore … even") for *kai dio*, and *ouketi* ("no longer") for *ouch hoti*. Grese (*Early Christian*, p. 9) has "the first composite form also does not concern me," but the personal references in the following sentences perhaps justify the looser "je n'ai plus souci de cette première forme composée qui fut la mienne" in NF II, 201. On death and renewal see also *PGM* IV.515–20, 645–50, 718–22 (Betz, pp. 48, 50, 52); Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 210–12, 328–32; *Poimandres*, pp. 368–70; NF II, 210, n. 32. Mahe', *Hermès* II, 381, refers to *A.D.* 7.4.

gazing … ***what ⟨I am⟩*** NF II, 201, inserts *eimi ou* ("not … I am") before *katanoeis* ("understand"). For *sōmati kai horasei*, Festugière has "les yeux du corps et … la vue sensible," and Scott I, 240, based his "bodily eyesight" on an emendation of *sōmati kai* to *sōmatikē*; Grese's (*Early Christian*, p. 9) "looking closely at my body and appearance" works just as well. Fowden (*EH*, p. 28) notes that from the point of view of this paragraph Hermes is a mortal who eventually gains immortality.

XIII.4 ***progenitor of rebirth:*** Scott I, 238–9, II, 377–8, who transposes this question and answer to paragraph 2, emends *genesiourgos* ("progenitor") to *telesiourgos*, "ministrant by whom the consummation … is brought to pass," and Festugière (NF II, 211, n. 27; cf. FR IV, 203) agrees that *genesiourgos* has this meaning here, i.e., referring to "initiation

in a mystery-cult … [in which] the *telesiourgos* … is the man through whose ministration … [the] initiation is completed, and the *mustēs* is made *teleios*." See below, section 21; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, p. 48; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 10, 96–7.

primal man: For *anthrōpos heis* Festugière (NF II, 202) has "un homme comme les autres," adding (p. 211, n. 28) Einarson's suggestion of "l'Homme un" as in *C.H.* I; see C.H. 1.12 on *anthrōpos*.

XIII.6 ***the unsullied … self-apprehended:*** On this sequence as a kind of negative theology, see Festugière, *Religion*, pp. 137–8, who has "nu, brillant" for *to gumnon*, *tophainon* in NF II, 202, but elsewhere (211, n. 30a; FR IV, 72, n. 1) he omits the second article and takes *phainon* as modifying *to gumnon*, "ce qui apparaît nu." In Gnostic accounts of the Garden of Eden and in more abstract contexts, nakedness had a negative value (Layton, GS, pp. 45–6, 71, 177, 255, 333–4; but cf. 347, 384); see Pagels, *Eve*, p. 12, on *Jubilees* 3.16–31, for a view from Hellenistic Judaism. See also Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 10–11, 100, and Scott II, 382–3, for "self-apprehended," which assumes *to hautō katalēpton* rather than *autō*. Tröger, *Gnosis*, pp. 90–7, provides a list of seventeen pairs of contrary terms to illuminate his argument for Gnostic dualism in this treatise.

awareness … *blocked:* Mahé, *Hermes* I, 97, commenting on *NHC* VI, 6.54.18–22.

diffuses … *if something:* Reading *eupnoon* ("diffuses") for *sumpnoon*; see NF II, 202, 212–13, n. 32. After "air" (*aēr*) Nock shows a lacuna, which Reitzenstein filled conjecturally with *aisthēsei hupopiptev ho de chōris toutōn*, the reading followed here.

birth in god: Festugière (NF II, 212, n. 33; cf. I, 25, n. 67; FR III, 114; IV, 202) explains this phrase (*tēn en theōgenesin*) by reference to the higher powers of *C.H.* 1.26 that "enter into god" (*en theō ginontai*) or "are born in god." See also below, sections 7 and 10.

XIII.7 ***Draw it … will begin:*** NF II, 203, 212, n. 34, following Turnebus, emends *eite* to *estai* ("will begin"), and Festugière has "attire-le" for *epispasai*, but Dodds (*Anxiety*, p. 76, n. 5) writes that "the candidate for divinization has to 'draw in' … the divine breath"; cf. FR III, 169–74, IV,

216, 249; *PGM* IV.537–40, 628–30 (Betz, pp. 48, 50). Grese (*Early Christian*, pp. 13, 105–6) has "draw into yourself," following Einarson.

Cleanse … *tormenten:* For other accounts of this process of purgation and dematerialization, see notes on the "vehicle" and "tunic" in *C.H.* I.25, III.2, VII.2. NF II, 213, n. 36, cites *PGM* VII.303 (Betz, p. 125), a love charm with a command in the name of those "who have been placed [in charge of] the Punishments"; cf. Scott II, 384–5; *C.H.* I.23, XII.4.

twelve in number: NF II, 212, n. 37, refers to the phrase "zodiacal circle" in section 12 below as confirmation that this list of twelve vices is zodiacal, as other lists of seven (*C.H.* I.23–5, VI.1–3, IX.3) may be planetary; Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologumena*, p. 311. The soul, which has accreted these vices in its fall through the zodiac, sheds them as it ascends; see also Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 214–15, n. I, and FR I, 280, n. 4, 367, for similar material in the *Final Accounting* of Zosimus, and Braun, *Jean*, p. 268, for Essene parallels; cf. Scott II, 385; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 111–12.

use the prison … inward penon: Following a scribal note, NF II, 203, corrects the definite article (*tou*) before "prison" from *touto* in the manuscripts. See above, note on *C.H.* XII. 12, for the Stoic term, *endiathetos* ("inward"), which Scott II, 386, finds impossible in this sense; cf. Fowden, *EH*, p. 108, NF II, 212, n. 39 and Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 113–15, who call attention to the Pauline conceptions of "inward" and "outward" man (e.g., II Cor. 4:16) and to the analogous material in Zosimus and other sources discussed by Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 450–1; Jackson, *Zosimos*, pp. 23, 29, 43, 49.

XIII.8 ***you … mercy:*** See FR IV, 203, n. 3, on *katapausei* ("y^{ou} will … obstruct") as second person, future, middle of *katapauō*, with an active meaning; cf. NF II, 203; Scott II, 387. Dodd (*Bible*, p. 240) thinks that the mention of mercy here, above in section 7, and below in section 10 is "much more Hebraic than Greek," but Grese, *Early Christian*, p. 117, disagrees. For the Father's mercy in a Gnostic text, see Layton, *GS*, pp. 261–2. See also Mahé, *Hermès* I, 100–1, and above, notes on "will" and "wishes" in section 2.

Henceforth: Festugière (NF II, 213, n. 43; also Scott II, p. 387) explains that between this word and the previous sentence one must imagine a period of silence and ritual action, as in *NHC* VI.6.57.26–8 (Mahé,

Hermès I, 111), which mentions a kiss; the first Greek word of this sentence, *chaire* ("rejoice"), was used in Mithraic rites to greet the new initiate; *TDNT* IX, 362. Grese (*Early Christian*, pp. 117–18), however, sees no need for a break here and puts the end of the initiation at the close of section 9, but see below, section 16. J.-E. Ménard (1977), pp. 163–5, compares sections 8–10 with *NHC* III.5.142.16–24, VI.3.35.2–18.

powers … the word: For the arrival of the powers, see *NHC* VI.6.57.28–30; Mahé (1974b), p. 61. NF II, 204, gives "purifient à fond" for *anakathairomenos*, but FR IV, 203, has "purifié et rénové tout ensemble." In the same place, Festugière has "la construction (en toi) du Verbe" (cf. Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 46) for *sunarthrōsin tou logou*, but the version in NF II is "l'adjointement des membres du Verbe," explained in NF II, 213, n. 44, as "the construction of the new man, who is the divine word in us" and elsewhere (*HMP*, p. 22) as "the Logos interior to man." Grese (*Early Christian*, p. 15) has "to build up the Logos." See also Fowden, *EH*, p. 108; Scott IVF, 387–8; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 201; and Reitzenstein, *Historia*, pp. 99–100; *HMR*, pp. 48–50, 99, 338–51, which interprets this phrase in light of Col. 3:5–15 on vices, virtues and members of one body: "The basic perspective of the Hermetic writing … [is] that a specific number of vices form the natural man, and a like number of virtues form the god or the new man." Reitzenstein goes on to describe a seven-part and a twelve-part system for this assemblage of vices and virtues in Iranian, Jewish and Greek sources; cf. *Studien*, p. 45. Festugière (1944), p. 260, refers to Eph. 4:12. Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 109–10, connects this "re-integration by means of re-assembling and contraction" with a distant memory of "the Egyptian custom of disassembling and re-assembling the defunct in imitation of Osiris." Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 44–5, suggests Egyptian analogs for some of the ten powers.

***ignorance … expelled*:** Fowden (*EH*, p. 109) contrasts the *gnōsis* achieved suddenly in this treatise with the gradual ascent described in *C.H.* I.24–6 and IV.8–9.

XIII.9 ***next level… justice:*** Fowden (*EH*, p. 97) cites this occurrence of the word *bathmos* ("step," "rank," "grade") in arguing that the "initiatory" *Hermetica – C.H.* I, XIII, *NHC* VI.6 – contain the best evidence for his view that the *Hermetica* present "a philosophical *paideia*" composed of progressive steps (*bathmoi*), beginning with *epistēmē* of earthly humanity

and of the cosmos as God's creation; moving through *gnōsis* of God himself and of the "essential" man; and culminating in man's divinization; *ibid*., pp. 95–115; cf. *NHC*. VI.6.52.13, 54.28, 63.9; *S.H*. XXIII.7; Mahé (1974b), p. 59; Keizer, *Discourse*, p. 67. Grese (*Early Christian*, pp. 16–17, 124–5, 129) understands *bathmos* to "refer to a step in the procedure of regeneration" and not "to a metaphorical ascension to heaven parallel to … *C.H*. I, " as Nock had proposed. (Grese also prefers "basis" to "seat" as a translation of *hedrasma*.) Mahé, *Hermès* I, 46, argues that the disciple in *NHC* VI.6.52.13, 54.28, 57.29, undergoes only the eighth and ninth levels of purification, while *C.H*. XIII presents all ten levels.

***without a judgment*:** NF II, 204, following Parthey, emends *ktiseōs* to *kriseōs*.

made just: See Arndt and Gingrich s.v. *dikaioō*, 3a–c, which explains that "Paul … uses the word almost exclusively of god's judgment," so that *dikaiousthai* means *"be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous …* as a theological technical term, *be justified*. … In the language of the mystery religions…, *dikaiousthai* refers to a radical inner change which the initiate experiences," as in this passage, which Dodd (*Bible*, pp. 58–9) identifies as the only non-Christian text in which *dikaiousthai* means "be made righteous." Dodd also argues that the "mystical" interpretation of the passage (which comes from Reitzenstein) "does not do justice to the context. … At each stage … an ethical change takes place… . *[C.H*. XIII] is one of the few *Hermetica* ... where … Christian influence may be traced. In that case the author must have been acquainted with Pauline language as interpreted by Greek commentators… . But this is uncertain." Schrenk (*TDNT* II, 213) claims that in this passage *edikaiōthēmen* "perhaps consciously given a Christian reference, definitely means: 'we have become sinless,"' but Grese (*Early Christian*, pp. 17, 125) disagrees, opting for "righteous" or "pure." Festugière (NF II, 213, n. 45) denies that the word means "'justified' in the Pauline sense, Rom. 3:21–4; 6:6." Cf. I Tim. 3:16; Scott II, 388, finds a purposeful ambiguity: "pronounced just" and "made just."

greed – liberality: Grese (*Early Christian*, p. 17) has "generosity" for *koinōnian*; NF II, 204, has "la bonté qui partage," but cf. FR III, 155; Scott II, 388; *TDNT* III, 798–800. See above, *C.H*. X.22, for *koinōnia* in another sense, the "community" of souls among gods, humans and animals.

the good has been fulfilled*:* The word "fulfilled" (*peplērōtai*) is related to *plērōma*, on which see above, note on *C.H.* VI.4. These words mark one phase in the battle of virtues against vices, but, according to Ferguson (Scott IVF, 388–9), the virtues named so far are "the planetary seven," not a zodiacal twelve. The seventh virtue is truth, followed by the good, life and light to make up "the decad" announced in section 10; for "life and light," see above, *C.H.* I.9; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 108–10. NF II, 213, n. 46, says that this relation – sometimes one of opposition between a higher Decad and a lower Dodecad (above, *C.H.* XI.2) – was a feature of Gnostic belief, as, for instance, in the system of thirty Aeons, composed of an Ogdoad, a Decad and a Dodecad. In Ptolemy's myth (Layton, GS, pp. 282–3; cf. 31–4), after the Word and Life emit ten Aeons, the Man and the Church emit another twelve. Scott II, 388–9, explains the relation among seven, twelve and ten as the result of redaction and interpolation; cf. Reitzenstein, *Historia*, pp. 108–10.

XIII.10 ***the twelve … divinized***: NF II, 204, 214, n. 48, following Reitzenstein, emends *dōdekatēn* to *dōdekada* ("twelve") and *etheōrēthē-men* to *etheōthēmen* ("divinized"); Tröger, *Gnosis*, p. 12.
recognizes … intelligibles: Reading *noētōn* ("intelligibles")with Cumont for *toutōn*, and emending *sunistamenos* to *sunistamenon* ("constituted") with Nock and Patrizi; Festugière translates "les Puissances divines," which assumes *dunameōn* for *toutōn*; NF II, 205, 214, n. 49. Puech (1946–7), pp. 116–17, notes a passage in the *Phaedrus* commentary of Hermias in which Hermes is depicted as the archetypal Gnostic who attains rebirth by self-recognition.

XIII.11 ***made me tranquil***: Festugière (NF II, 205, 214, n. 51) translates *aklinēs* as "inébranlable" and associates it with the state of mystical repose attained by the initiate; Grese (*Early Christian*, pp. 17, 135–6), has "steadfast"; Scott II, 390, thinks the word probably corrupt; Lewy, *Oracles*, p. 373, discusses the "unbent" vision of the soul's eye.
womb; everywhere*:* Scott II, 391, points out the resemblance of this passage to *C.H.* XI.20; see also *A.D.* 6.2; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 377.
twelve ... ***by ten:*** Above, note on section 9, and below on 12.

XIII.12 ***This tent:*** The normal word for "tent" is *skenē*\ the word used here and in paragraph 15 below, *skēnos*, is usually figurative for the body as a place of lodging, e.g., lodging for the soul, a usage occurring as early as the pre-Socratics (*TDNT* VII, 368–9, 381–3). NF II, 214, n. 53, cites II Cor. 5:1–4 as well as *PGM* IV.448, 495 (Betz, pp. 46, 48); see also: Wisd. 9:15; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 450–2; and for the corresponding verb, *skēnoō*, John 1:14. Here, as Fowden points out (*EH*, p. 109; cf. Festugière, *HMP*, p. 63; Scott II, 392), the tent of the body is subject to fate because it was made by the zodiac.

constituted of … ***confusion:*** After *ek* ("of"), NF II, 205, brackets *arithmōn* ("numbers") as redundant, given the appearance of *ton arithmon* as well. Festugière (NF II, 205, 214, nn. 53, 55), who calls this paragraph "heavily mutilated," prefers "elements" (*stoicheiōn*, Reitzenstein) to "entities" (*ontōn*) and also attaches the phrase "to mankind's confusion" (*eis planēn tou anthrōpou*) to the end of the first sentence of the paragraph, as does Grese (*Early Christian*, p. 19), but Reitzenstein identified a lacuna after "appearance" (*ideas*). For "omniform" (*pantomorphou*) and its zodiacal meaning, see *C.H.* XVI.12; *Asclep.* 19, 35; Scott II, 392–3; cf. Festugière (1953), p. 237.

disjunctions … ***anger:*** Einarson (NF II, 214, n. 53) points out that if four of the twelve vices constitute two *diazugiai* ("disjunctions"; "couples" in Festugière, NF II, 205; "divisions" in Grese, *Early Christian*, p. 19) which act as unities, the twelve become ten. (See above, note on *C.H.* VI. 1 for the Valentinian *suzugiai*.) Recklessness and anger make one such unified disjunction; the other is not named. Grese (*ibid.*, pp. 139–42), criticizes this analysis. NF II, 205, indicates a lacuna after "act" (*praxei*).

retreat: Literally, "make themselves a separation" (*ten apostasinpoiountai*), for which NF II, 205, has "battent en retraite" and Scott I, 247, has "depart." Grese (*Early Christian*, p. 19) has "they all depart when they are driven out by the ten."

decad engenders … ***decad the henad:*** Cumont (NF II, 215, nn. 56–8) identifies six as the number that usually generates soul, but on the Decad as a good psychogenic number, see Scott IVF, 388–9, where Ferguson also notes Reitzenstein's remarks (*HMR*, pp. 49–50; see also *Erlösungsmysterium y* pp. 94–7, 156–62) on the Greek letter "I" as the sign of Aion. As a numeral, "I" means "10," but it can also represent unity. Old Testament tens (commandments, prediluvian patriarchs, ark

measurements) are mostly positive, and Philo considered ten a perfect number. Aware of the usually inferior position of soul vis-à-vis spirit in the "trichotomous anthropology" of the Gnostics, Tröger, *Gnosis y* pp. 90, 99–103, concludes that the soul and spirit engendered here by the Decad refer to the same divine entity. See also C.H. 1.5, IV.10, XII.15; *TDNT* II, 36–7; Bousset, *Hauptprobleme*, p. 341; Grese, *Early Christian*, p. 19.

XIII.13 ***Father … in mind:*** Cf. *NHC* VI.6.57.31–58.8; Mahé (1974b), p. 61.

dimensions … ***himself wishes****:* NF II, 206, following Reitzenstein, shows a lacuna after "dimensions" (*diastaton*). Festugière (NF II, 215, n. 61) conjectures *hon eis se monon* ("that … for you alone") for *eis hon*, which Nock obelizes along with the verb *hupemnēmatisamēn* ("I have noted down"); Fowden (*EH*, p. 99) interprets the verb in the context of C.H. 1.30 and also of *NHC* VI.6.61, where Hermes urges Tat to "write this book for the temple of Diospolis in hieroglyphic characters … on steles of turquoise"; cf. FR II, 41. The phrase "but … to those whom" adopts Reitzenstein's addition of *all*[1] ("but") before *eis hous*, also obelized by Nock. "Casting it all" follows Festugière's interpretation of *diaboloi tou pantos* in FR IV, 205, n. 1; cf. NF II, 215, n. 62, and Scott I, 255, II, 394, who has "maligners of the universe" and transposes this whole sentence to the end of the discourse; see also: *Asclep*. 1; *TDNT* II, 72; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 19–21, 146–8.

XIII.14 ***profaned*****:** NF II, 206, 215, n. 63, has "affecté d'une souillure" for *asebēthēsetai*, interpreting it on the basis of Plato, *Laws* 877E, where the topic is a house defiled by crime and thus needing ritual purification; cf. Scott II, 395.

XIII.15 ***Father … been purified:*** My translation of these two sentences involves several departures from NF II, 206, 215, nn. 65–7, as set forth by Festugière in FR III, 154, n. 1, IV, 164–5, n. 4, 206, nn. 1–3; "I had entered" preserves the manuscript reading *mou* ("I") over Reitzenstein's *sou* ("you"); "just as" (*kathōs*) begins a new sentence in NF II, but Festugière's later version breaks the sentence between "foretold" (*ethespise*) and "child" (*teknon*), inserting, with Scott, an "O" of direct

address between them. See also: above, section 12, on "tent"; C.H. I.Title, 9, 24, 26; Scott II, 395; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 22, 153–4.

ogdoad: Above, *C.H.* I.26.

Poimandres, the mind … written down: Festugière (NF II, 216, nn. 68–9; cf. I, 172–3; FR II, 8) points out the titles "mind of sovereignty" and "word of sovereignty" in C.H. 1.2, 30, concludes that the material "written down" is C.H. I, but notes other correspondences between this treatise and *C.H.* XI and XII. Comparing this passage to *C.H.* XII.8, Fowden (*EH*, p. 102; Zielinski [1905], p. 350) remarks that "one treatise appears to dismiss another as apocryphal." See also: Scott II, 395–6; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 6.

entrusted: NF II, 207, 216, n. 71, has "a prescrit" for *epetrepse*, while Scott I, 249, II, 396–7, has "left it to me."

XIII.16 ***end of everything:*** The end of the discourse up to this point – before the hymn – or else the end of the initiation, according to NF I, 216, n. 73; above, note on "Henceforth" in section 8.

secret … silence: Above, sections 1,13, and below, 22.

stand in … the east: For a similar ritual, see *Asclepius* 41; NF II, 217, n. 75, 352, 398, nn. 341–2; Braun, *Jean*, pp. 262–3, suggests Essene parallels.

Formula IV: Scott II, 398–9, thinks that this fourth *logos* was one of a set of hymns extracted from the Corpus, the three others being *C.H.* 1.31, V.10 and *Asclepius* 41. He also attempts a reading of the hymn (pp. 409–18) as accented poetry in the Byzantine style, rather than classical Greek meter. Grese (*Early Christian*, pp. 159–64), doubting the metrical analysis of sections 17–20 in Scott and Zuntz (1955), pp. 174–7, is reluctant to draw any conclusions about the other three hymns. Festugière (NF II, 217, n. 76) agrees with Scott on C.H. 1.31 and *Asclepius* 41. Nock, however, thinks that the number was an accident of redaction and suggests "formula" for *logos*. He (1929a, p. 194) and Festugière cite several resonant passages in the Magical Papyri: *PGM* 1.96–132, IV.l 167–1226, XIII.343 (Betz, pp. 5–6, 61, 182). On the question of biblical influences in the hymn, see above, note on the title of this discourse, and Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 166–73. Mahé (*Hermès* I, 117, II, 288, 292; Fowden, *EH*, p. 110) cites parallels to Egyptian hymns of the XVIIIth and XlXth dynasties and to *NHC* VI.6.59; also Segelberg (1977), pp. 64–6.

XIII.17 ***lock … torrent:*** Cf. Zuntz (1955), pp. 156–8.

lord of creation: Above, *C.H.* I.9, on "craftsman"; Zuntz (1955), pp. 167–8, cites similar language in LXX Judith 9:12 and III Macc. 2:3, but he also stresses the un-biblical character of the opening words of this section, *pasa phusis* ("every nature").

sweet water*… *uninhabitable: Cf. Zuntz (1955), pp. 158–60,170–2; LXX Job 38:26 (note the dating problem identified by Zuntz).

XIII.18 ***Powers within:*** Festugière (NF II, 217, nn. 78–9) divides the hymn here and calls the first part "proprement gnostique," but Scott II, 401, begins the second part earlier, with "He is the mind's eye," as does Grese (*Early Christian*, pp. 158–9, 165, 176), who suggests that "the Hermetic cult" may have been responsible for the initial "hymn to the creator God" and that the instructions from Hermes for singing the hymn "were originally rubrics" for the cult. Grese compares this first part of the hymn with various "hymnic or confessional passages" in early Christian literature.

knowledge … life and light: For enlightenment, light, life and *gnōsis*, see Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 112–14; above, section 9.

from you … you: NF II, 208, following Reitzenstein, corrects *aph' hēmōn* to *aph' humdn* ("from you").

through me your … ⟨my⟩ word: This translation adopts the punctuation suggested in FR IV, 208, n. 5, 246–7, n. 1, setting *to pan* ("universe") in commas as a vocative and dropping the comma after *logō* ("⟨my⟩ word"); cf. Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 28–9, 181–2. Note that Festugière translates *logtkēn thusian* ("speech offering") as "sacrifice spirituel" in NF II, 208, but as "sacrifice immatériel" in FR IV, 247; on this key term here and in the next section, see *C.H.* I.31; NF II, 217, n. 81.

XIII.19 ***your counsel … returns:*** Following Reitzenstein's punctuation (*Poimandres*, p. 347; *HMR*, p. 422; Scott IVF, 389; NF II, 217, n. 82): a comma after *apo sou* ("from you") but not after *epi se* ("to you"); cf. Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 28–9; Zuntz (1955), p. 155. For "counsel" (*boule*), which Reitzenstein identifies here with "wisdom" (*sophia*), see above, *C.H.* I.8.

god*, {*spiritualize*} … *craftsman: Reading *pneumatize* with Keil (NF II, 208; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, p. 115) for *pneuma*, obelized by Nock; Dodd (*Fourth Gospel*, pp. 47, 218–9) prefers "inspire." Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 335, 372–3, takes *phōtize* to mean "make into light" in keeping with the Iranian conception of light as the divine part of the soul. Festugière construed *poimainei* ("are a shepherd") as third person, active, in NF II, 208, 217–18, n. 83, but in FR IV, 247, n. 3, he proposed the second person, middle. For *Poimandres* and *poimainō*, see above, note on the title of *C.H.* I. "Spirit-bearer" is Dodd's rendering of *pneumatophore*, for which Festugière has "porteur de l'esprit." On all those points, see also Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 30–1, 181–2.

XIII.20 ***Your man***: This phrase translates *ho sos anthrōpos*, as in *C.H.* I. 32; cf. *C.H.* I.12.

through fire … your eternity: NF II, 218, n. 84, refers to *C.H.* I. 26 and *PGM* IV.487–536, the beginning of the spell in the so-called "Mithras Liturgy," in which the initiate passes through spirit, fire, water and earth to become Aion; *Chaldaean Oracles* 121 (Des Places, p. 96) promises that "the mortal who will have approached the fire will have light"; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 171–6; Reitzenstein, *Erlösungsmysterium*, p. 174; cf. Scott II, 404–5.

your counsel: Above, section 19; *C.H.* I.8.

XIII.20–1 ***From your eternity … my cosmos:*** This translation adopts the punctuation and interpretation proposed in FR IV, 164–5, n. 2, 208, nn. 1–2, 248, notably: the insertion of an article (*tou*) between *apo* ("from") and *sou* ("your"); the extension of the end of the sentence beyond *anapepaumai* ("found … rest") to *thelēmati tō sō* ("your will"); the insertion of a comma after *anapepaumai*; and the ascription of the phrase beginning *ten eulogian tauten* ("this praise") to the disciple rather than the teacher; cf. NF II, 208, 218, n. 85; Scott II, 404–5; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 30,185–6, and for the god Aion ("eternity"), see above, note on *C.H.* XI.2.

XIII.21 ***fully illuminated:*** The attainment of full (or "further"; Grese, *Early Christian*, p. 31; cf. Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 115–16) illumination (*epipephōtistai*), according to Fowden (*EH*, p. 106), involves

the knowledge of god emphasized in sections 15–21 of this treatise, while sections 7–14 concern the preliminary but indispensable knowledge of the self. See also: NF II, 218, n. 87; Scott II, 405–6; and Mahé, *Hermès* I, 44; Mahé (1974b), p. 60, on the two illuminations in *NHC* VI.6. Mahé sees *NHC* VI.6.55.6–61.17, as composed of four parts – two prayers and two illuminations – corresponding to the structure of *C.H.* XIII, where Tat's first illumination occupies sections 7–13 and Hermes' hymn sections 15–20; Tat's second illumination occurs here in section 21, followed by Tat's "speech offerings" in the rest of section 21.

To you … ***willing it:*** The Greek for "genarch of progeneration" is *genarcha tes genesiourgias*, for which see above, note on section 4, NF II, 218, n. 90, and Adam (1967), pp. 297–8. Zuntz (1955), pp. 150–2, identifies this passage as a prelude to a hymn and suggests a metrical arrangement entailing two emendations: excision of the second "God" (*thee*) and replacement of the second "speech" (*logikas*) by "sacrifice" (*thusias)*.

everything is accomplished: The Greek, *panta teleitai*, as above in paragraph 16, *telei tou pantos* ("end of everything"), denotes any kind of ending or consummation but connotes an initiatory or mystical accomplishment; see Dodds, *Irrational*, pp. 291–5 on *telestikē* and *telein;* also NF II, 218, n. 91; Scott II, 406–7; *TDNT* VIII, 57–8.

also add: In other words, Tat is directed to add the phrase that follows to the prayer that he has just finished: "To you, god … willing it." Mahé, *Hermès* II, 46, compares this "chétive action de grâces" unfavorably with the better ordered and richer thanksgiving in *NHC* VI. 6.60.17–61.2; see also Festugière (1944), p. 258; (1945), pp. 194–5.

XIII.22 ***{for approving … made}*:** Nock (NF II, 209, 218, n. 92) obelizes the words *tauta moi ainein euxamenō*, which he finds untranslatable, and Festugière's version is "des conseils que tu m'as donnés dans ma prière"; in FR IV, 209, n. 4, however, he proposes "d'approuver cette prière que j'ai faite," concluding that this interpretation is "not absolutely silly."

promise … ***betrayers:*** On the promise (*epangeilai*), see above, note on title, and Festugière's reference (NF II, 218–19, nn. 94–5) to *PGM* XIII. 230–4 (Betz, p. 179), in which, when "the initiation called *The Monad* has been fully declared" and the "child … has been filled with divine wisdom," he is ordered to "dispose of the book so it will not be found."

For other injunctions to secrecy, see: above, sections 13, 16; *C.H.* I.31–2, XVI.2; *Asclep.* 1, 32; Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 79–80; Cumont, *Egypte*, pp. 152–5; FR I, 351–4. The Greek for "betrayers" is *diaboloi*, for which see above, note on section 13; Festugière (HMP_y p. 148, n. 32; NF II, 219, n. 96) explains that a *diabolos* is "a sort of blasphemer" who betrays the mystery's secrets to the profane; Ferguson (Scott IVF, 390) suggests "blabber"; see also: Reitzenstein, *HMR*, p. 376; Keizer, *Discourse*, pp. 31–3; Malaise (1982), p. 59.

enough study: FR IV, 210, associates the verb *epimeleomai* ("pay attention to") with the noun *epimeleia* in the sense of "attentive study undertaken by teacher and pupil" and with *meletē* as a technical term for a school exercise; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 195–6.

XIV
From Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius, health of mind

Title Scott II, 420, explains that *euphronein* ("health of mind"; literally, "to be well-minded" or "kindly minded") is an epistolary greeting suitable to a religious topic. FR II, 16, 41–2, sees the letter-form as a "scholastic fiction." Cyril of Alexandria (*Against Julian* 597D–600A; Scott IV, 217–18) quotes most of sections 6–10, using the title "On the nature of the all"; NF II, 220, and for Cyril's *testimonia* as aids to establishing the text, see also 403–4. On Tat, see above, C.H. I. Title, IV.3; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 190–1.

XIV.1 ***Because … particular*:** NF II, 223–4, n. 3, points out that this explanatory clause could apply logically either to the sentence that precedes it ("In your … delay") or to the statement that follows ("I was … explanation"); Scott II, 421–2, prefers the latter. Scott also claims that Tat, as a beginner, needed "full and detailed explanations" or *diexodikoi logoi* (*C.H.* V.1, X.1; *Asclep.* 1) which would have been "superfluous … to Asclepius, who knew much that Tat did not know; Hermes therefore considers it enough to send to Asclepius a short summary," all of which "implies that the author of *C.H.* XIV had before him a series of discourses

of Hermes to Tat, and wrote this document as an epitome." Reitzenstein (*Poimandres*, p. 191, n. 1; NF II, 220, n. 1) thinks that the description of Tat is a redactor's effort at a transition from *C.H.* XIII, where Tat has the same characteristics (sections 2–3) even though the subject of the treatise is different; FR II, 41–3, disagrees, arguing that the banal content of C.H. XIV is in no way "more mystical" (below) than the previous treatise and that this introduction is nothing more than a scholastic convention appropriate to a *hupomnēma*, a collection of notes.

to hold forth: Above, *C.H.* I.32 on *paradosis*.

***headings … more mystical*:** Mahé, *Hermes* II, 311, refers to the forty-eight *kephalia* or summaries comprising *S.H.* XI; Mahé (1976), p. 194; "more mystical" translates *mustikōteron*, on which see above, *C.H.* I.16.

XIV.2 those that are begotten: NF II, 221, n. 1, 222, 224–5, n. 4, treats *gennēta* ("begotten") here as the equivalent of *genomena* ("come to be"), but I have retained the distinction.

XIV.3 *alone:* The Greek is *monos*, for which see NF II, 225, n. 5; for *monas*, see above, note on C.H. IV.10 and FR IV, 18, n. 3; "solitary" at the beginning of paragraph 6 below is also *monos*,

are seen* … *is seen: Nock (NF II, 223; cf. Scott II, 423) has intervened to adjust the apparent confusion in the manuscripts as to what is *aoratos* ("unseen") and what is *horatos* ("seen").

XIV.3–4 *this is why … recognized*: Above, *C.H.* IV.2; Puech (1957–61), pp. 76–7, compares this passage with the second saying of the *Gospel of Thomas* (Layton, GS, p. 380): "Jesus said, 'Let the one who seeks not stop seeking until that person finds; and upon finding, the person will be disturbed; and being disturbed, he will be astounded; and will reign over the entirety.'"

XIV.4 *alone the name*: *C.H.* II.14; V.l, 10; *Asclep*. 20; *S.H.* VI.19; NF II, 225, n. 10.

loquacity* … *third thing: Festugière (NF II, 226–7, nn. 11–12, 15; cf. Scott II, 419, 425) identifies the denial of intermediary divinity here and in section 5, below, as anti-Gnostic and compares it to Plotinus in his anti-Gnostic period; it certainly stands in contrast with the theology of such

treatises as *C.H.* I and XIII, but cf. XI.12, 14 and section 7, below. See also the complaint in I Timothy 1:4–7 against "fables, … endless genealogies … [and] vain jangling."

XIV.5 ***remember … difficulty:*** NF II, 223, 226, n. 13, has "souvienstoi donc de ces deux et sois convaincu que tout se résume en ces deux-là," but cf. Scott I, 259. The Greek for "reckoning no difficulty" is *mēden en aporia tithemenos*, for which NF gives "sans tenir quoi que se soit pour une chose qui fasse doute." For *aporia*, see above, *C.H.* IV.6, and for *tithēmi* with *en* in the sense of "hold," "reckon," "regard," LSJ s.v. *tithēmi*, BII, 3.

deep down: Festugière cites several texts where *muchos* has the meaning "lower" or "infernal regions." He also compares the sequence "above," "below" and "deep down" to Philippians 2:10 and *PGM* IV.3041–5, V.l65–70 (Betz, pp. 96, 103).

the two are all there is: Above, *C.H.* XIV.4; Scott II, 424–5.

⟨nor⟩ from itself: The negative (*oude*) is an editorial insertion; NF II, 224.

XIV.6 ***the maker … the making:*** In what follows, "the maker" is *ho poiōn*, "the making" or "what makes it" is *to poioun* or *to poiein*, the latter in one case Einarson's emendation; Festugière (NF II, 224, 226, n. 16; cf. above, *C.H.* I. 9) has "créateur" and "fonction créatrice" or "le créer." For "begotten" and *genneton*, see above, note on paragraph 2; "generation" is *genesis*.

Thus if one: Cyril's quotations begin here; above, note on Title.

god who makes … whatever: Einarson (NF II, 227, n. 17) notes the untranslatable resonance between *ho poion* ("who makes") and *hopoion* ("whatever").

XIV.7 ***against the diversity … to god*****:** Some Gnostics believed that the extension of divine unity into the diversity of creation would offend the supreme god, so they ascribed creation to a secondary deity; the *Apocryphon of John* (*NHC* II.l.9.25–13.15; Layton, GS, pp. 35–8), for example, tells how an aeon, the Wisdom of Afterthought, begets through asexual intellection "an imperfect product," the Satanic Ialtabaoth, "serpentine, with a lion's face, … the eyes gleaming like flashes of

lightning." Wisdom casts Ialtabaoth out of the realm of the immortals and tries to hide, but the monstrous child, called "the dim ruler," steals power from Wisdom and creates his own realm with twelve rulers who set up seven kings over the seven heavens and so on through the lower hierarchies. Finally, as the *Apocryphon* begins to parallel and interpret the Genesis story, "the image of the ordered world" is begotten by Wisdom's stolen power within the first ruler. For the similar role of the Craftsman (Demiurge) in Ptolemy's myth, see Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.5.1–6, 7.4 (Layton, GS, pp. 290–6); see also *C.H.* I.9, 25–6; *Asclep*. 15–16; Scott II, 426, and NF II, 224, 227, n. 18, where Nock follows Aubert, Cyril's editor, in reading *periapsai* ("attach") for *perigrapsai*, *periapsēs*, etc.

God's glory*:* Scott II, 426, sees the use of *doxa* ("glory") here as "rather Jewish than Hellenic"; see above, note on *C.H.* VIII.8.

this making: The Greek is *poiēsis*; cf. above, *C.H.* IV. 1; NF II, 227, n. 18a; Scott II, 426.

persistence … repurify: For *epidiamonē* ("persistence") Festugière (NF II, 225, nn. 19–19a) has *durée*; "bloom like a sore," or more prosaically, "break out," renders the sense of *exanthein* in LSJ s.v. *exantheō*, I, 3; cf. Scott II, 426–7; for "repurify" (*anakatharsin*), see FR IV, 203.

XIV.8 ***how foolish … the making:*** Bousset (1914), p. 113, and Jonas, *Gnosis* I, p. 154, identify this as polemic against the dualist conception of a Demiurge; above, section 7.

XIV.9 ***only one condition:*** As in the preceding paragraph, "condition" is $pathos_f$ on which see above, note on C.H. VI.2.

XIV.10 ***four of them:*** The four named just above: immortality, change, life and motion; NF II, 227, n. 26; Scott II, 428.

XVI

Definitions of Asclepius to King Ammon on god, matter, vice, fate, the sun, intellectual essence, divine essence, mankind, the arrangement of the plenitude, the seven stars, and mankind according to the image

Title Foix de Candale in his edition of 1574 counted this as the sixteenth treatise; he added a fragment from the *Suda* to three from Stobaeus inserted after *C.H.* XIV by Adrien Turnebus in 1554, treating them as a fifteenth treatise, and this numbering was preserved in Scott I, 19–20, and NF II, 227. Editions of Marsilio Ficino's translation of the Corpus before the Greek *editio princeps* of Turnebus did not include *C.H.* XVI because Ficino had worked from MS Laurentianus grec. 71.33, which (like the rest of its family and a few others; NF I, xi–xvii) includes only the first fourteen treatises. Thus, even in the nineteenth century, Parthey's edition (*Hermetis Trismegisti Poemander*, 1854) reflected the selection of treatises which Ficino had known, along with his mistake in calling the whole collection *Pimander*. The first version of *C.H.* XVI available in the West was the Latin translation made by Lodovico Lazzarelli in the late fifteenth century and first published by Symphorien Champier in 1507. Lazzarelli's translation, which also contained the first manuscript to include all seventeen Greek treatises together with the *Asclepius* in a single Latin text (Viterbo, Biblioteca Communale, cod. II DI4), treats *C.H.* XVI– XVIII as a unit, as did Turnebus in 1554. See: Dannenfeldt (1960), pp. 138–41, 149–51; Kristeller, *Studies*, pp. 226–8.

Festugière notes that the contents of this treatise do not coincide precisely with its title, which Nock attributes to a redactor; despite the word *horoi*, he argues that it is not a collection of "definitions" but a continuous presentation of Hermetic teachings on God's relation to the world: below, sections 15–16, 19; NF II, 228, nn. 1–2; FR II, 17–18; Scott II, 428–9, 434–5. Mahé (*Hermès* II, 275–9, 293), who edited and translated the Armenian *Definitions* (*A.D.*) first published in 1956, places this treatise in the context of Greek gnomologies and Egyptian wisdom literature. On the term "image" (*eikōn*), see *C.H.* I.12, V.6, VIII.2; *Asclep.* 23; *A.D.* 1.1. The last words in the title are *peri tou kat eikonaō* "on

mankind according to the image." In LXX Gen. 1:26, God announces his intention to "make man according to our image and likeness" (*poiēsōmen anthrōpon kat' eikona hēmeteran kai katW homoiōsin*).

King Ammon, who appears as *Hammona* six times in the *Asclepius*, is a Greek version of Amun or Amon-Re. In the Hermopolitan theology, the male Amun and the female Amaunet were the fourth of four such pairs arising from Nun, the primeval water, and constituting an Ogdoad. The name "Amun" means "hidden" or "invisible," and he was identified with wind and air as cosmic elements, but he also joined with Re, the sun, in the syncretic form Amon-Re, honored in Thebes in the New Kingdom as king of gods. The animal identified most closely with Amun was the ram; another was the serpent, a god called *Knēph* and *Agathodaimōn* in Greek and identified both as *nous* and as *dēmiourgos*.

Greeks connected Amun's royal characteristics with Zeus and his dominion over the air and with the powers of *pneuma*. Amun's cultcenter in the Libyan oasis at Siwa became known to Greeks by the early fifth century, and its oracle was important enough for Alexander to journey there to consult Zeus Ammon. Both Plato and Iamblichus treat Ammon as an important channel for the dissemination of the wisdom of Thoth/Hermes to the Egyptians. Iamblichus writes about the "way" (*hodon*) revealed by Hermes, discovered by the "prophet" Bitys and interpreted for King Ammon, and he mentions this just after having asserted of Egyptian theology that "they certainly do not just speculate about these things; they recommend rising up toward the higher and more universal levels through priestly theurgy." What precedes Iamblichus' remark about the transmission of theurgy is a mixture of metaphysics, magic and theology; following it is a discussion of psychology and determinism. Given this remarkable transition, Fowden interprets the material from Iamblichus as "the crucial allusion to theurgical Hermetica" and concludes that "these texts were not dissimilar to the philosophical Hermetica known to us."

See: above, *C.H.* I.1, 15, 26; below, section 3; *C.H.* XVII; *Asclep*. 1, 22; Plato, *Phaedrus* 274D; Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.3.262–3, 4.267–6.269; *PGM* IV.155, 2007; Nock (1929a), pp. 183–4; Sethe, *Amun*, pp. 122–6; Pietschmann, PW I/2, cols. 1853–7; Pieper, PW VII/2, cols. 2311–12; Parke, *Oracles*, pp. 109–10, 119–21; Griffiths, *De Iside*, p. 374; Doresse (1972b), p. 443; Fowden, *EH* ***y*** pp. 32, 140–1, 150.

XVI.1 ***Hermes*** … ***used to say that*****:** Both NF II, 231, and Scott II, 437, believe that, up to some point, Asclepius' report of what Hermes said might be rendered in direct discourse; Scott puts the break at *logōn echousa* ("keeps … concealed"), but I have included the next statement as well.

when the Greeks**:** The conceit in this and the following paragraph is that the original language in which Asclepius wrote to Ammon was Egyptian, of which the Greek version is supposedly a translation; above, Title; Scott II, 437; Fraser, *Alexandria*, I, 71; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 451–2. Derchain (1962), pp. 178–9, (1970) p. 133, calls this passage "the most admirable definition of the function of language as Egypt conceived it" and sees "no reason to doubt the claims of the Hermetic authors when they declare themselves Egyptian." Fowden (*EH*, pp. 37–9) sees the passage as strong evidence of Egyptian linguistic nativism in the *Hermetica;* cf. NF II, 232, n. 4; FR I, p. 326, II, 17; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 254–5.

XVI.2 ***⟨sound⟩ of Egyptian:*** Nock (NF I, lii, II, 232, n. 5) conjectures *ēchō* ("sound") to fill the gap that occurs between "Egyptian" and "words" (*onomatōn*) at this point, and Festugière translates "la propre intonation." Turnebus read *dunamis* ("force") from the *testimonium* (Scott IV, 247–8) of Nicephorus Gregoras, a scholar of the fourteenth century, who included all but the last two sentences of section 2, though in a different order, in his commentary on Synesius, *On Dreams*. Mahé, *Hermès* I, 99, commenting on *NHC* VI.6.55.6–7, emphasizes a special power flowing from father/master to son/pupil, as in C.H. I. 27, 32.

keep … *uninterpreted:* Above, *C.H.* XIII.22.

energetic … ***usage:*** The phrase is *tēn energētikēn tēn onomatēn phrasin*, "la vertu efficace des vocables de notre langue" in NF II, 232.

inane foolosophy of speeches: The pun in *logōn psophos* contrasts the "wisdom" (*sophia*) in *philosophia* with "empty sound" or "noise" (*psophos*). NF II, 232, n. 6, notes that the pun occurs *ad nauseam* in patristic writings. Some early Christian authors, like Tertullian, denounced philosophy as utterly useless and a breeder of heresy, but this passage may be closer in spirit to the critique of rational "demonstration" (*apodeixis*) in the "Christian Gnostic," Clement of Alexandria, who saw some good in philosophy; Scott IVF, 390–1; Daniélou, *Doctrine*, II, pp. 306–7, 318–22; Cochrane, *Culture*, pp. 222–3.

sounds … ***full of action:*** NF II, 232, reads *mestais* ("full") for *megistais*, following Tiedemann. Even Plotinus (*Ennead* 5.8.6) was impressed by what he took to be the intuitive power of Egyptian hieroglyphics: "each carved image is knowledge (*epistēmē*) and wisdom grasped all at once, not discursive reasoning nor deliberation." Iamblichus (*On the Mysteries* 7.4.254–6) was more enthusiastic, seeing "an intellectual, divine and symbolic character of divine resemblance … in the names, and if this is unknown to us, it is then most august since it is too mighty to be known by determination.… The gods have shown us that all the speech of the sacred nations, such as the Assyrians and the Egyptians, is fit for sacral usage." He also (8.4.265–6) remarked on "writings circulating as written by Hermes that contain Hermetic (*hermaïkas*) opinions even though they often use the language of the philosophers, since they were translated from the Egyptian language by men not without experience in philosophy." For examples of the magical use of Egyptian, Hebrew and other Middle Eastern languages, see Ferguson, *Religions*, pp. 167–8, 177; see also NF II, 232–3, n. 7; FR I, 326; Bellet (1978), p. 62; Bergman (1969), pp. 223–4; Layton, GS, pp. 106–7, 118; cf. Cumont, *Religions*, pp. 187, p. 279, n. 69.

XVI.3 ***god the master*** … ***are one***: For Egyptian parallels, see Derchain (1962), pp. 185–6; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 292; and below, section 5, on the solar Demiurge whom Derchain likens to Atum, the All of the Heliopolitan theology. The One retains its unity in constituting the plenitude (*plērōma);* see above, *C.H.* VI.4; NF II, 234–8, nn. 7, 12; Scott II, 439.

Keep … ***meaning:*** NF II, 233, translates *ton noun diatērēson* as "garde cette façon de penser," but cf. p. 237, n. 9, for Einarson's suggestion of "garde en mémoire ce sens."

all must be one: As Fowden (*EH*, p. 77) says: "The fullest accounts of cosmic sympathy in the philosophical Hermetica can be found in *C.H.* XVI and the *Asclepius*"; cf. FR I, pp. 85, 90–2, and *C.H.* VIII.5, which actually uses the word *sumpatheia*, unmentioned here. Otherwise, the scarcity of theoretical or descriptive material on magic in the philosophical *Hermetica* outside the Stobaean collection (e.g., *S.H.* VI, XXIV-XXVI) may result, as Fowden suggests (*ibid*., pp. 9, 117–18), from Byzantine Christian censorship, which may also explain the breach in the manuscript tradition between treatises I-XIV and XVI-XVIII. Fowden's impressive

arguments (*ibid*., pp. 121–53) for a continuity between Hermetic philosophy and a Hermetic theurgy depend mostly on materials outside the *Corpus Hermeticum*, such as the fragments of Zosimus and Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries;* the *Kyranidés* and other "technical" *Hermetica* discuss magic, but rarely from a theoretical point of view (*ibid*., pp. 77, 89; above, note on title). Since Marsilio Ficino introduced the Latin West to the Greek *logoi* in a translation that stopped with *C.H.* XIV, the non-magical character of the first fourteen treatises deserves attention from those influenced by the facile identification of "Hermetic" with "magical" in the learned literature on the influence of the *Hermetica* in the Renaissance and after – this despite Fowden's demonstration of the connection between magical and philosophical materials in the original context of the *Hermetica*.

XVI.4 ***founts*** … ***one root***: Ferguson (Scott IVF, 391) interprets the passage as taking "the phenomena of hot mineral springs … as evidence that the three elements may spring from one root … [when] sea-water is filtered through the channels of the earth, driven by *pneuma*, and may gather other qualities from the substances it passes through."

in return … ***above:*** Beginning with these words, Scott II, 432–4, identifies a number of borrowings from *C.H.* XVI in the *Hermippus*, locating the others in sections 7, 8, 10, 12–17. He also finds traces of *C.H.* I, IV, X and XIII in the *Hermippus*, on which see above, X.6.

craftsman … ***binds:*** Following Reinhardt, Nock reads *sundei* ("binds") for *aei* in the manuscripts; Scott and Festugière comment on the divinity of the sun in various contexts relevant to the *Hermetica* – Egyptian, Syrian, Platonic, Stoic, Neopythagorean, Mithraic and the cult of Sol Invictus; see: NF II, 233, 238, n. 15; Scott II, 430–2, 440–2; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 152–6; Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologúmena*, pp. 307–11.

deep and abyss: NF II, 238, n. 17, refers to *PGM* IV. 1120, VII.261 (Betz, pp. 60, 123–4) for the abyss; see also the various Gnostic senses of "deep" and "abyss" in Layton, *GS*, pp. 68, 94, 173, 248–9, 281, 407.

XVI.6 ***sun's mass:*** For *ho toutou onkos*, NF II, 234, 238, n. 18, gives "le volume du Soleil" with "la masse" as a more literal alternative, referring to *C.H.* VIII.3, "body and bulk" (*sōmatopoiēsas kai onkōsas);* cf. below, section 12; Scott II, 442–3.

Only … ***observe:*** Nock shows a lacuna in two places here: after "knows" (*oiden*) and before "We … do not" (*mē huph' hēmōn*). After the second lacuna, Nock obelizes eight words left untranslated by Festugière and approximated here by "we … observe it." Scott I, 266–7, fills these gaps conjecturally and translates the result as "God does not manifest himself to us; we cannot see him, and it is only by conjecture, and with hard effort, that we can apprehend him in thought."

XVI.7 ***Since*** … ***ray itself:*** Festugière (NF II, 238, n. 19) suggests this translation and cites Plato (*Republic* 508A-B) and Plotinus (*Ennead* 5.3.17.28–38) on the relationship between the sun and vision; Plotinus concludes that "the sun is seen by no light but its own."

like a crown: For the many cultic uses of the crown (*stephanos*) in late antiquity, see *TDNT* VII, 617–19, 623–4, 631, 634. In the rites of Mithras, the invincible sun, the initiate was offered a crown which he was to reject with the reply that Mithra was his only crown; *PGM* IV. 1026–7 (Betz, p. 58) invokes the god "seated within the seven poles, AEEIOUO, you who have on your head a golden crown": Cumont, *Mithra*, pp. 95, 156; NF II, 238, n. 20; Layton, *GS*, pp. 136, 139. The "Chaldaean" order of the planets with a central sun is given above, *C.H.* I. 9; cf. Scott II, 444–6.

driver … ***chariot:*** The most prominent chariot image in Greek philosophy was Plato's myth in *Phaedrus* 246–56, but Festugière (NF II, 239, n. 21) identifies the cosmic chariot in this passage as Iranian in origin, and Scott II, 446, refers to the story of Phaeton and to Philo, *On the Cherubim* 7.24.

fastens the reins: Scott IVF, 392, refers to Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.18.15–16.

XVI.8 ***feeds:*** NF II, 234, 239, n. 24, following Tiedemann, reads *trephōn* for *trephontos*.

XVI.9 ***transmutation*** … ***to form:*** According to Ferguson (Scott IVF, 393), these changes (*metabolai*) represent the "ceaseless fecundity" of life rather than the stark inevitability of death. Nock, following Turnebus, emends *allēlogenē* in the manuscripts to *allēla*, *genē* ("another, from kind"). In this sentence, the words "kind" and "form" (*genē genōn kai eidē eidōn*) might be rendered "genus" and "species"; Festugière has "de

genres à genres et d'espèces à espèces" but suggests also "espèces" and "individus," referring to *Asclep*. 4: NF II, 235, 239, n. 26.

XVI.10 ***battalions*** … ⟨***with mortals***⟩: Einarson (NF II, 239, n. 28) suggests that *strateiais* (normally "campaign" or "expedition") is a mistake for *stratiais* ("host," "company," "band"; here "battalions"); "with mortals" assumes Reitzentein's conjecture of *tois thnētois ontes* in the lacuna indicated in NF II, 235.

XVI.11 ***to assist:*** For *epamunein* NF II, 235, 240, n. 31, has "porter aide," noting that the author may have been thinking of *amunomenoi*("repay") at the end of section 10.
dare … ***daring:*** Above, note on *C.H*. I.25.

XVI.12 ***making*** … ***makes solid***: For *onkōn* and *onkoi* NF II, 236, 240, n. 33, has "gonflant" and "donne … volume"; above, section 6, and Scott II, 449–50, IVF, 393.

XVI.13 ***arrayed under*** … ***energy is:*** Festugière (NF II, 240, n. 35) sees an allusion here to the thirty-six decan stars of Egyptian astrology, and he provides a useful account of them in NF III, xl-lxi; cf. *Asclep*. 19; Gundel, *Dekane*, pp. 345–6. For *energeia* he gives "activité," but see *C.H*. X.l; Scott II, 450–2, mentions that *S.H*. VI. 10 describes the demons as "energies of those thirty-six gods."

XVI.14 ***granted authority:*** NF II, 236, renders *exousian* ("authority") as "plein pouvoir." In the New Testament and in Christian Gnostic texts *exousiai* are sometimes personal supernatural entities, angels or demons, but Foerster (*TDNT* II, 562–3, 570–4) does not find this usage "in Hellenism or pagan Gnosticism." All other occurrences in the Hermetic Greek treatises are in *C.H*. I.13, 14, 15, 28, 32; cf. I Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21, 3:10, 6:12; Col. 1:16, 2:10, 15; Layton, GS, pp. 36–40.
reshape our souls: Bousset (1915), pp. 156–7, interprets sections 14–15 as a transition from the "optimist monist basis" of sections 3–13 to a "specifically demonological dualism."

XVI.15 ***birthy***, ***arrayed:*** Following Reitzenstein, NF II, 236, corrects *timēn* to *stigmēn* ("moment"). The idea of the "personal demon" or "genius," the Christian "guardian angel," here takes the form of a threatening alliance with the fatal astrological power transmitted at the moment of birth; the verb "arrayed" is *etagēsan*, related to *taxis*, on which see above, note on *C.H.* I.13. Festugière (NF II, 240, nn. 39–41) detects in this passage a reference to the astrological doctrine of *aspects*, geometrical configurations of celestial bodies whose powers were thought to be linked at various times; cf. *Asclep.* 35; Scott II, 453; FR I, 265, referring to Zosimus, *On Apparatus* 2; Jackson, *Zosimos*, pp. 19, 42.

two parts: For *strobousin* ("twist… about") Festugière has "tourmentent"; he also indicates that these two are the *lower* parts of the soul; as explained below, the higher soul is untouched: J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 79–81; NF II, 236, 241, nn. 42–3; Scott II, 453; see also: *C.H.* I. 15; *Asclep.* 22; Plato, *Republic* 436A-441E; *Timaeus* 69A-72D; Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.6.267–8.272; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, Notes to pages 60–1 pp. 99–102, 174–6, 194–5, 290–4; Long, *Hellenistic*, pp. 170–8, 213; Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 182, 195.

XVI.15–16 ***But the rational … fate***: Scott II, 435, 453, IV, 15, believes that Lactantius alludes to this passage in *Divine Institutes* 2.15.7–8, misnaming it *Sermo perfectus*, the Latin for *Logos teleios*, the Greek original of the *Asclepius*: see *Asclep.* Title. On fate and the demons, see Jonas, *Gnosis* I, pp. 193–9; NF II, 241, n. 46; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 39.

XVI.16 ***anyone has … nullified*:** NF II, 237, following Keil, writes *hotō* ("anyone") for *tō, tōn* and other manuscript readings; for *aktis epilampei* ("ray shining"), see *C.H.* V.2, X.6, XIII. 18; *Asclep.* 23, 29; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 154–6; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 216, 411–12. {***And … love that*** }: The phrase *ho logos ouk erōs* is obelized by Nock, as is Festugière's translation, "C'est la raison, non l'amour"; Nock thinks that the meaning may be something like "Love, as the saying goes, misleads," which would require the excision of the negative *ouk* ; my translation follows Reitzenstein's conjecture, *kai houtos ho erōs*; NF II, 237; Scott II, 454.

the demons govern: Above, *C.H.* IX.3.

Hermes has called: Scott II, 454, refers to *C.H.* I.9; NF II, 230, refers to XII.5.

XVI.17 ***depends from god:*** NF II, 230, n. 2, refers to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b14: "On such a principle [the first mover]… depend the heavens and the world of nature."

Around the sun … ***the earth:*** Ordinarily, the earth is described as surrounded by eight celestial spheres culminating in the starry sphere (see above, note on *C.H.* I.26), but here we have the sun, the fixed stars, the six stars and – according to NF II, 241, n. 50; FR III, 123 – the atmosphere, for a total of nine, as in Vergil, *Aeneid* 6. 439; cf. Scott II, 456.

XVI. 19 ***everything:*** NF II, 238, following Reitzenstein, reads *panta de* for *ta de* in the manuscripts.

end: NF II, 228, n. 2, suggests that some of the discrepancy between the title of this treatise and its contents may be due to a missing ending, related perhaps to the incomplete beginning of the next treatise.

XVII

if you … ***king***: Only one manuscript (D) suggests any break between the first words of *C.H.* XVII and the end of the previous treatise. However, although most manuscripts treat this fragment as part of *C.H.* XVI, the king here (probably Ammon) is addressed by Tat rather than Asclepius; below, note on "prophet"; above, *C.H.* XVI.Title, 19; NF II, 242–3; Scott II, 457–8.

forms: Here and below, "forms" translates *ideai*,

seem … ***that there are:*** NF II, 243, following Reitzenstein, writes *dokousin einai* for *dokei oun* and similar manuscript readings.

reflections … ***in*:** The preposition "in" translates *pros*, which Festugière renders as "dans." He also explains that the first "incorporeals" mentioned below in the seventh paragraph are the mirror images referred to above, while the second "incorporeals" are the ideas; the suggestion is that one sees incorporeal ideas in bodies as one sees bodiless images in a mirror:

NF II, 243, nn. 2–3. For the mirror analogy in Plato, see *Sophist* 239D and Scott II, 459–60; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 454–6 refers to II Cor. 3:18, Phil. 2:6–8, 3:21, and other texts for various conceptions of reflection and transfiguration.

adore the statues: This is the only occurrence of *agalmata* in the Greek treatises; the famous "god-making" passages of the *Asclepius* are 23–4 and 37–8, which speak of *statuae*. For *andriantes* and *eikones*, see above, *C.H.* V.8, and below, XVIII.4, 16; NF II, 243, n. 4. Scott II, 460–1 cites passages from Plutarch and Plotinus to show that "cult-statues are mirrors in which *noēta* [intelligibles] are reflected."

they too … intelligible: Remarking that "they too" (*kai auta*) implies that the statues are not unique in possessing forms or ideas, Levy (1935), pp. 295–301, notes that the ensouled beings above are said to be like the soulless in possessing ideas; refers to the frequent pairing of statues and animals in anti-pagan apologetics; and then – on the basis of Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 71–6 (379C-82C) and Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Plato's Alcibiades* 2.136 – he concludes that sacred animals are the other things that possess ideas. The reading of "intelligible" (*noētou*) in NF II, 243, n. 4, is from a scribal correction for "sensible" (*aisthētou*). Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 198–9, understands *ideas* in the sense of "powers."

prophet: *Prophētēs* and related words occur four times in the Stobaean excerpts (XXIII.42, 68; XXVI.25) but only once in the Greek treatises. In non-biblical Greek of Hellenistic and Roman times, the range of the word reflected the syncretism of intellectual culture. Since the fifth century BCE, *prophētēs* and its cognates had applied honorably to oracles, e.g., of Dodona, of Delphi and of Zeus Ammon in Libya, but by the second century CE Lucian was using it pejoratively of the *goes* ("wizard"), Alexander of Abonoteichos. Long before Lucian's day, in an inscription of the later third century BCE from Canopos, *prophētēs* translated *hm-ntr*, the title of a class of Egyptian priests of high rank, who were appointed by the king and who may have been called prophets by association with Ammon's oracle. The Gnostics were also interested in true and false prophets: Layton, *GS*, pp. 115, 178–9, 292, 295–6, 389, 395. Iamblichus (*On the Mysteries* 8.5.267, 10.7.293) and Zosimos (FR I, 268; Scott IV, 106,120; Jackson, *Zosimos*, pp. 27, 46–7) mention a "prophet" called Bitus or Bitos. Thus, as Festugière writes (NF II, 243, n. 5), there is no need to connect Tat as a Hermetic prophet with the Jewish *nabi; TDNT* VI, 783–96; Cumont,

Egypte, pp. 119–21; Scott II, 461, IV, 72–4; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 297–300; *Poimandres*, pp. 101–9, 202–7, 219–31; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 150–3; above, C.H. 1.15, XVI.Title.

theologize: NF II, 243, n. 7, points out that Aristotle uses the verb *theologein* in *Metaphysics* 983b29, to mean "discourse on the gods and cosmology"; LSJ s.v. *theologeō*; Fowden, *EH*, p. 95.

XVIII
On the soul hindered by the body's affections

Title Nock assigns the title to a redactor, and Festugière concludes that it fits only the first six paragraphs of the discourse, which he calls "an insipid piece of rhetoric in rhythmic prose," referring to Reitzenstein's analysis. Scott, like Festugière, concludes that this treatise has no real connection with the rest of the Corpus, but Nock is less categorical. Scott and Einarson hear echoes of the rules for a royal encomium given by the rhetor Menandros in *Peri epideiktikōn*. Accordingly, Scott writes that the treatise "consists of two or three fragments of an epideictic oration 'in praise of kings,'" and he accepts Reitzenstein's finding that the kings in question were the *Augusti*, Diocletian and Maximian, and their *Caesares*, Galerius and Constantius, thus dating *C.H.* XVIII to about 300 CE. Diocletian, who was active with Galerius in Alexandria, Coptos, Philae and other sites after 293/4, was the last emperor to visit Egypt during his reign, which marked the end of Roman Egypt and the beginning of Byzantine Egypt; below, sections 10, 14–15; NF II, 244, n. 3, 247–8; Scott II, 210 461–2; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 199–208, 359, 371–4; Bowman, *Egypt*, PP 44–6.

XVIII.1 ***piece*** *…**many instruments:*** NF II, 248, translates *tēs pammousou melōdias* by "d'un chant qui offre toutes les variétés de musique"; Scott I, 274, accepts *pammousou* but absorbs it into "harmonious melody." My translation, less literal than Festugière's, is perhaps justified by the role of the variety of instruments in the following passages.

effort *…* ***jeer at:***Scott II, 466, thinks that the last words in the first sentence of the Greek text, *katagelaston to epicheirēma* ("effort will be laughable"), introduce a gloss that includes the whole second sentence.

Taking *epicheirēma* as a technical term meaning "attempted proof," he bases his analysis on the contradiction that he perceives between the second sentence and other remarks that follow: e.g., "no one would blame" in section 2, "let us not put" in section 4, "no one ever blames" in section 5, and so on.

performance: In rhetoric an *epideixis* was a declamation or set-speech, but here it refers to a musical event, which Festugière (NF II, 243–4, 248, n. 1; cf. Scott II, 466–7) calls a "concert." He also notes the associated idea of a musical contest (*enagōnizesthai peri mousikēn*) at the beginning of section 2 and explains that the order of instruments mentioned corresponds to actual practice in theatrical contests of the Hellenistic period; above, note on title.

⟨the hearer⟩: After the verb *katamemphetai* ("finds fault"), the last word in the third sentence of the Greek, Scott and Nock show a lacuna, in which Scott conjectures *ho akroatēs*, "pupil" or "listener"; NF II, 248, n. 2; Scott I, 275.

musician … nature: Following Einarson, Nock brackets the word *theos* ("god"); NF II, 248.

XVIII.2 ***their skill:*** For *epistēmē* as "skill," see above, *C.H.* X.9–10.

after … almighty: Nock obelizes nine words from *kai kalamō* ("reed-pipe") through *epitelountōn* ("finished") and shows a lacuna following them. Festugière proposes inserting *allōn de* ("others") before *kalamō* and *to organon ouk hupēkousen enteinomenō* ("instrument failed under the strain") after *epitelountōn*. For "inspiration" (*pneu- mati*), see Scott II, 467; Festugière has "*souffle*"; NF II, 245, 249. Keizer, *Discourse*, p. 16, refers to *NHC* VI.6.30–1 for "plectrum"; cf. *C.H.* IX.6.

hindering … robbing: NF II, 249, following Reitzenstein, reads *empodisasa* ("hindering") for *empodisas* and *sulēsasa* ("robbing") for *sulēsas*.

XVIII.3 ***irreverently … our kind:*** Nock, following Reitzenstein, emends *eusebōs* ("reverently") to the negative *asebōs*. For *to hēmeteron genos* ("our kind") Festugière has "notre race," which could mean either "orators" or, according to Reitzenstein, "prophets": NF II, 249, n. 7; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 200–7; above, *C.H.* XVII.

XVIII.4 ***craftsman*** … ***diversity***: Phidias is the ideal type of the sculptor, who frequently represents God; Festugière thinks that "diversity" may refer to his famous Athena, executed in gold and ivory; in Nock's text a lacuna, identified by Reitzenstein, follows *entelē tēn poikilian* ("consummate diversity"); NF II, 249–50, nn. 9–10; cf. Scott II, 469–70.
slackened … ***the tone:*** The only words that differ in these two phrases are the verbs, *hupochalasasa* and *huparaiōsasa*; "tension" and "tone" both translate *tonon*. Scott II, 464–5, speculates that this and other repetitions in the discourse arose from the process of transcribing or composing a speech. Nock believes that the second is more likely the original phrase, and Festugière translates only one of them; NF II, 250, n. 11.

XVIII.5 ***hits the right tone:*** NF II, 250, following Reitzenstein, shows a lacuna after *empesousēs*.
{***So*** … ***⟨divine⟩ musician***}: This sentence is obelized not because it is unintelligible but because it is out of place, writes Festugière, NF II, 250, n. 13; Scott II, 471, connects it with the beginning of section 3 or with the second sentence in section 7.

XVIII.6 ***magnificent***. [ ] ***They say:*** Between these two sentences, NF II, 250–1, n. 14, and previous editions omit fourteen words that duplicate the passage after "They say"; cf. Scott II, 471–3, and Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 205–6, who refer to the story of the musician Eunomos of Locri told by Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 1. 2.4; Strabo 6.1.9.
In place of … ***cicada:*** NF II, 251, following Reitzenstein, emends *arti* to *anti* ("in place of"). For the story of the cicada, see Scott II, 471–3, who traces it to Strabo and Clement, as above.

XVIII.7 ***and from*** … ***trophies:*** NF II, 251, corrects *tōn ex* to *ek* tōn.
Come, ***then*** … ***will:*** Another doublet, as in section 4.

XVIII.8 ***hopes also derive***: Reading *paragesthai* ("derive") with Festugière, Scott and Reitzenstein in place of Nock's *periagesthai*; NF II, 252, n. 19

XVIII.9 ***⟨those who⟩… due course*:** NF II, 252, inserts "those who" (*hoi*) before "have received" (*diadexamenoi*) and ends the sentence with a lacuna after *Nikēn* ("victory").

XVIII.10 ***prizes … battle:*** Scott II, 475–6, speculates that this may allude to the Roman triumph over the Persians in 296–8 CE, but NF II, 254, n. 22, sees this passage in the context of astrological determinism; Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 44–6.

On praise … panegyric: Scott II, 479, thinks that the panegyric proper is missing and that section 11 begins the peroration that would properly have followed it. NF II, 244, sees this title as better suited to the discourse as a whole than the one that actually stands at the beginning.

XVIII.11 ***rays like great hands:*** The image of the sun reaching down with hand-like rays became an artisitic motif in the Egypt of Akhenaton; the sun's rays were a manifestation of *heka*, a magical power that energizes the universe, but FR I, 90–1, sees this allusion to solar magic as an empty metaphor in this "purely literary" text; cf. Scott II, 480; NF II, 255, n. 24; Derchain (1962), pp. 181–2; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 453; Fowden, *EH*, p. 76; Griffith, *De Iside*, p. 497.

most ambrosial … plants: The word "effluences" is not in the Greek; Festugière (NF II, 255, n. 24) has "les plus suaves parfums des plantes" for *ta tōn phutōn ambrosiōdestata*; cf. *C.H.* I.29; *Asclep*. **6**.

XVIII.12 ***god*, ⟨*then*⟩ :** The word "then" (*oun*) is an editorial insertion by Nock, following Reitzenstein, who thinks that some other term of rhetorical decoration such as *kai panaristō* ("best of all") has dropped out after *panakēratō* ("entirely undefiled"); NF II, 253.

beginning: NF II, 253, following Reitzenstein, corrects *charin* to *archēn*.

XVIII.13 [***For the king … same***]: NF II, 253, 255, n. 26, considers this sentence a gloss.

presented tous … : Nock shows a lacuna after *edōrēsato* ("presented"), which Festugière fills conjecturally with the phrase "while being entirely unworthy of god, pleases him because we are his children"; NF II, 254–5, n. 27.

XVIII.14 ***promise*** … ***praise that saves***: For "promise" (*epangelian*) see above, *C.H.* XIII.Title; after *diasōstiken euphēmian* Nock shows a lacuna, identified by Reitzenstein; NF II, 254–5, n. 28.
one mind, ***the father*****:** NF II, 255, n. 30, identifies this as "a Hermetic idea," citing *C.H.* I.6, above.

XVIII.15 ***with god*** … ***through god:*** Following Turnebus, NF II, 254–5, n. 31, corrects the manuscript reading *apo tou* to *apo toutou* ("with god"), giving the translation "à Dieu" and remarking that the parallel *dia toutou* ("through god"; Festugière has "par Lui") is another "Hermetic idea," resembling *dia tou logou* ("through the word") in *C.H.* XIII.21.

XVIII.16 ***king*** … ***light step:*** The Greek puns on *basileus* ("king") and *basei leia* ("light step"); the latter is Nock's correction, following Reitzenstein, of *basileia* in the manuscripts; NF II, 255; Scott II, 476–7.
dominion … ***withdrawal:*** According to Derchain (1962), pp. 184–5, the king's power to bring peace simply by speaking or showing himself is an Egyptian conception.
statues … ***stand by it:*** Contact with the emperor's statue was held to confer sanctuary or asylum; Scott II, 477; NF II, 255, n. 35.

Asclepius

Title The words in the subtitle following "sun" are in Greek. Scott (III, 1; IV, 2–27, 155–61,179–227, 230–2) writes that *Logos teleios*, the title of the original Greek version of this treatise, meant "a discourse in which the teaching is brought to completion"; cf. *C.H.* IX. 1.

Lactantius, who composed the *Divine Institutes* between 304 and 311 CE, refers in that work (4.6.4; 6.25.11; 7.18.3) to a Greek *Logos teleios* and to a corresponding *Sermo perfectus* in Latin. Later, around the middle of the sixth century, Joannes Lydus also mentioned a *Logos teleios* in his work *On Months*, a compilation on festivals and the calendar from older

Roman authors. Greek passages from the *Perfect Discourse* were cited by pseudo-Anthimus, Cyril of Alexandria and Stobaeus as well. Papyrus Mimaut gives a Greek version of the prayer in *Asclep*. 41, also represented in a Coptic text (*NHC* VI.7), along with *Asclep*. 21–9 (*NHC* VI.8); Mahé (*Hermès* II, 47–9) argues that the Coptic represents the original Greek better than the Latin *Asclepius*. Lydus wrote in Greek, Lactantius in Latin, but both reproduce passages in Greek (e.g., *Divine Institutes* 2.14.6; 4.6.4; 7.18.4 [cf. *Asclep*. 28, 8, 26]; *De mens*. 4.7, 149 [cf. *Asclep*. 19, 39, 28]). Lactantius also cites the *Sermo perfectus* in Latin, but not in a version corresponding to the surviving text of the *Asclepius*, which occurs first in Augustine's *City of God* (8.23, 24, 26; *Asclep*. 23–4, 37), composed between 413 and 426. Thus, a Greek text (or texts) corresponding to the *Asclepius* was in circulation by the early fourth century, but the existing Latin version may have been prepared as much as a century later. Since many of the earliest references and testimonia to the *Asclepius* and other *Hermetica* come from North African Latin Christians (Lactantius, Augustine, Tertullian, Arnobius), it has been suggested (Carcopino, *Rome*, pp. 286–301) that the translator was a North African. Nock (NF II, 277; cf. Scott I, 79–81) disputes Scott's speculation that another North African, Marius Victorinus (died *c*. 363), may have done the Latin version, whose traditional attribution to Apuleius is groundless. See also: NF IV, 104–14, 126–46; Wigtil (1984), pp. 2286–8; Moreschini, *Studi*, pp. 27–49.

Many editors and other scholars have believed that the *Asclepius* is a composite of previously existing materials; in any event, it is quite long and covers a great many topics. For various schemes of division and organization, see: Zielinski (1905), p. 369; NF II, 275–95; FR II, 18–27; Scott III, A4^{r}; IVF, xxviii-xxxii; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 62; Mahé (1981), pp. 407–34; see also: below, section 10, on "theory"; Goodspeed, *Literature*, pp. 159–65, 182–7; W. Rusch, *Fathers*, pp. 25–9, 114; Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 331–8; Moreschini, *Studi*, pp. 72–8.

1 ***more divine*** … ***any we:*** The word represented by "any" (*omnium*) is a genitive in a construction – related to the comparative "more divine" (*divinior)* - where the Latin would require an ablative (*omnibus);* Nock (NF II, 278–9; cf. 357, n. 3; Scott III, 5) provides a list of such grecisms as

part of the evidence that the *Asclepius* is a translation of a Greek text; below, sections 4, 5, 23, 27, 29; Wigtil (1984), pp. 2293–5.

reverent fidelity: NF II, 296, has "scrupuleuse piété" for *religiosa pietate* ; see above, *C.H.* 1.22 on "reverence" and *eusebeia*, and below, section 22, "faithful affection," on the difficulty of rendering *pietas* and its relatives.

If you … completely full: *C.H.* IX.4; NF II, 357, n. 5; the reader should be aware that Festugière's notes identify many more connections between the Greek treatises and the *Asclepius* than those recorded here; see also Nock's list in NF II, 284–7; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 305–6.

they are linked: Ferguson (Scott IVF, 394–5) identifies *conexum* ("linked") as the first allusion to a major theme of the treatise, represented by such words as *coniunctio*, *conexio* and *cognatio*; see especially sections 4–7 below.

Tat … Hammon: No surviving treatise is dedicated by Hermes to Hammon or Ammon, whom Asclepius addresses in *C.H.* XVI; see XVI.Title, and on Tat, IV.3; NF II, 357, nn. 8–9.

No jealousy: Invidia ("jealousy") represents *phthonos*, according to Festugière (FR II, 38) a feeling that would exclude the uninitiated from the mysteries. In *C.H.* V.2 and XVI.5, the divine is *aphthonos* ("ungrudging"); cf. *Timaeus* 29E.

popular topics: Nock (NF II, 297) thinks that *exotica* ("popular") may be the translator's response to an unfamiliar Greek word, perhaps *exōterika* or *diexodika*, on which see above, *C.H.* V.l, X.l, XIV. 1; FR II, 39.

I shall write: FR II, 37, points out the close connection between the notion of a written treatise and the typical mode of a Hermetic dialogue, the oral instruction of a student/son by a master/father, on which see above, *C.H.* I.32, on *paradosis*. Despite the presence of four persons, the dialogue is really an address by Hermes to Asclepius.

make public: NF II, 357, n. 10, indicates that *publicare* is equivalent to *diaballein*, as in *C.H.* XIII. 13, 22.

four men : This mention of *quattuor virorum* is the only instance of the specifically male *vir* ("man") in the *Asclepius*, but *mares* ("males") and *feminae* ("females") occur in section 21, below; translations of *homo*, *humanus* and *humanitas* parallel those of *anthrōpos* and its relatives; above, *C.H.* I.12.

divine love: Scott III, 8, alludes to Plato's *erōs* in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, but Festugière (NF II, 357–8, n. 12) emphasizes the binding force of love (above, "linked") as an agent in the cosmology of the *Asclepius*, and Nock (*ibid*.) refers to Orphic connections, to the association of Hermes with Eros, and to Cupid-Eros as the name of a Decan (below, section 19; Gundel, *Texte*, p. 296).

2 ***soul is immortal:*** For Platonic and Stoic antecedents, see Scott III, 8–9; NF II, 358, n. 13.

reason's true restraint: The text in NF II, 297, is *vera rationis continentia*, but W. Kroll and others have preferred *verae*, for which Nock offers "de la maîtrise-de-soi de la droite raison" or "du contenu de la droite raison" or, keeping *vera*, "de la vraie maîtrise de la raison" as alternatives to Festugière's "la vraie suite du raisonnement"; in Nock's view, *continentia* represents either *enkrateia* ("continence" in *C.H.* XIII.9, 18) or else an unusual Latin usage for "contents" (*contenu* in French).

all are one … ***called all:*** FR II, 68, distinguishes this paragraph, in which God is equivalent to the All (*omnia*), from the next, in which Whole (*totum*) = All (*omnia)* = World. For "all are one" as a Hermetic theme with roots in Greek thought reaching as far back as the Pre- Socratics, see NF II, 358, n. 15; Scott III, 9–11; Moreschini, *Studi*, pp. 94–5. Gersh, *Platonism*, I, 345–8, connects this passage with similar language in section 34, arguing that "God is identical in a primary sense with created things as they pre-exist in him …, and only in a secondary sense with created things as they exist outside him after … creation… . Since the relation of God to created things is … that … of the atemporal to the temporal … the divine nature turns out to be both transcendent and immanent from different viewpoints."

From the heavens: FR I, 358–9, sees the passage between here and the end of section 3 as evidence of connections between the "philosophical" *Hermetica* and the "popular" variety, with their emphasis on astrology and magic.

upward … ***down:*** Above, *C.H.* I.4 and Scott III, 12, on *anōpherēs* and *katōpherēs*, *sursum* and *deorsum*.

Soul and matter: The Latin noun *mundus* means "world," either the universe as a whole or the planet earth or a large region of the earth; it can

also refer to the sky or heavens. The same noun means "instruments" or "equipment" in general, but especially cosmetic articles used by women. The adjective *mundus* means "clean," "elegant," "tidy," thus suggesting a relation parallel to the connection between "cosmetic" and "cosmic" as descendants of the Greek *kosmeō*, which means both "put in order" and "adorn." *Mundanus* is the adjectival form of *mundus*, meaning "world." However, *anima et mundus* in this section is the first of several instances where *mundus* and derivatives such as *mundanus*, which must often correspond to *kosmos* and *kosmikos* in the Greek original, represent *hulē* and *hulikos*, "matter" and "material"; below, sections 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 22, 23, 28, 29; NF II, 359, n. 21; Scott III, 14; Moreschini, *Studi*, pp. 113–15, 127. Except in such special cases, I have translated the noun *mundus* as "world"; note that in section 10 below the translator seems to have been bothered by the lack of an exact Latin analogue of *kosmos*.

quality: NF II, 298, following previous editions, corrects *aequalitate* to *qualitate*.

forms: The normal translation here of *species*, though the same word is also represented by "scene" (11), "class" (19) and "figure" (23). Scott (III, 15–18; NF II, 360, n. 31) recognizes that *species* must often correspond to *eidos*, but, on the basis of Seneca's distinction in *Letter* 58.16 ("What is meant generally [*generaliter*], such as mankind in general [*generalis*], is not subject to being seen, but the specific thing *[specialis*], such as Cicero and Cato, is so subject. One does not see 'animal,' one thinks it, but one sees its species *[species]*, horse and dog"), he makes a case for rendering *species* as "individual" in sections 3–4. Scott's argument is strengthened by the statement in section 4 that *species enim pars est generis ut homo humanitatis* ("a form is a part of a kind, as a human is of humanity"), although one might also take *homo* to mean "mankind" as a species and *humanitas* as some larger class or genus. In any case, for purposes of consistency, I have preferred "form" in these passages. NF II, 298, renders *species esse noscantur* here in section 2 as "on y reconnaît un nombre infini d'espèces," but in section 3 below (NF II, 299, 360, n. 31) *per animam omnium generum et omnium specierum* becomes "à travers l'âme de tous les genres et de tous les individus." Contrary to the passage cited from section 4, the relation of *species* to *genus* cannot be like the relation of *homo* to *humanitas* if *species* means

"species" in the modern sense of the word since *homo* does not correspond to *humanitas* as species to genus. Any consistent translation of *species* and *genus* in the *Asclepius* is impossible, but "form" and "kind" at least have the virtue of not implying a species-genus relation as in modern usage. For Gersh's analysis, see his *Platonism*, I, pp. 351–4. See also above, *C.H.* XI.16–17; below, sections 3–6, 11, 17–19, 23, 27, 32–6, 41; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 112–13.

3 ***whole of matter:*** Note that *mundus* occurs six times in this section: twice represented by "matter"; then twice by "world"; then twice again by "matter"; above, section 2.

consciousness: The Latin vocabulary of cognition, perception and intuition in the *Asclepius* presents problems at least as difficult as those described in *C.H.* I.1 above for the Greek treatises. "Consciousness" here and elsewhere (see especially section 32) renders *sensus*, which occurs forty-two times in the *Asclepius* in a great many meanings, which I have represented by "sense," "faculty," "meaning" and other terms. Festugière (NF II, 359, n. 26, 363, n. 63) correctly associates *sensus* with *nous* and usually translates it by "intellect en donnant à ce mot le sens … 'faculté d'intuition divin.'" Among other words used in the *Asclepius* to refer to cognitive, perceptive and intuitive processes and faculties are *mens* ("mind"), *animus* ("thought" or "thinking" as well as "soul"), *cognitio* ("knowledge"), *contemplatio* ("contemplation"), *intellectus* and relatives ("understanding"), *intentio* ("concentration," "intention," "effort"), *nosco* ("know"), *percipio* ("grasp") and *ratio* ("reason").

growth … moon: Above, *C.H.* I.25; XI.7; Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, p. 112.

heaven … in the world: Ferguson (Scott IVF, 396) identifies *caelum* ("heaven") here as the sphere of the fixed stars; on *kosmos*, see *C.H.* IV. 1–2, *Asclep.* 2, 6.

From all these: Scott III, 22, explains that ***supradictis … omnibus*** refers to the heavenly bodies; NF II, 299, has "tous ces corps célestes."

all forms … with forms: For "form" and *species*, see above, section 2, and NF II, 299, 360, n. 31, which explains that "forme sensible" has the same relationship to *genus* as the individual.

4 ***depend:*** For *pendentia* and its relation to *artaō*, see *C.H.* IX.9, X. 14; NF II, 360, n. 34; Scott III, 24; IVF, 396.

divided into … follow kinds: Above, section 2, note on "forms."
resembling itself: *sui similes* is an editorial correction of *suis similes*; *sui* can be either singular or plural; NF II, 300, has "les individus qui leur sont semblables."
another … living thing: This other kind of *animalis* is made up of plants, according to Scott III, 25; the notion that plants are soulless yet sensitive combines Platonic and Stoic positions on the question. The usual translation here of *animal* and *animalis* (cf. *zōon* in the Greek treatises) is "living thing," but see sections 6 and 21, where "ensouled" better represents *animalia*.
The aforesaid … things are immortal: Of this sentence and its context Festugière writes (NF II, 300, 360, n. 36; cf. Scott III, 27, IVF, 397) that "the whole passage is quite muddled, and I doubt that the author himself understood what he said." The main problems are the reference of "the aforesaid kinds" (*supradicta ... genera*) and, once again, the meaning of *species*, whose two occurrences in this sentence Festugière renders as "genres" and "individus," suggesting that in the first case "*specierum* … is certainly a bad translation of *genōn* or of *eidōn* in the sense of *genōn*, as opposed to *ideai* (or *eide)"*
Now a form … its kind: Above, section 2, note on "forms."
coming to be: This phrase or its equivalent usually translates *nascor* and its derivatives (in this case *nascendi*), Latin equivalents of *gignomai* and its relatives.
preserves … perish: Although the Latin requires plural verbs in both cases with the plural subject (*genera … occidant . . . servantur*), Nock (NF II, 278–9, 300, 360, n. 7; Scott III, 28; *Asclep*. 1) makes both verbs singular, explaining the anomaly as a grecism – a neuter plural subject with a singular verb – despite the manuscript evidence for *servantur*.
⟨but not kinds⟩: Nock inserts *genera non sunt*; NF II, 300.

5 ***some were … kept going:*** NF II, 360, nn. 38–9, agrees with Scott III, 29–30, that this passage is a poor fit here, and Scott calls it a gloss. Festugière interprets *inanimalia* ("soulless things"; cf. sections 4, 6) as vegetable life, but Scott believes that they are lifeless artificai objects such as houses or statues.
some form … into a form: NF II, 301, 361, n. 40, following W. Kroll, reads *alicui* ("some") in agreement with *speciei* for *alicuius* in agreement

with *generis*, translating *alicui speciei generis divini* as "avec un individu du genre divin," although also connecting *species* with *genos* in *defluentes in speciem*, "déboucher dans un autre genre." Above, section 2, note on "forms."

pattern: Like *logos* in the Greek treatises, *ratio* in its forty-four occurrences in the *Asclepius* requires many different renderings. Here *ratio* is transposed editorially from its place between *amantes hominum* and *daemones* ("demons … friendly to humans") in the previous sentence, where the *in* before *qualitate* is an emendation, following W. Kroll, of *sunt* in the manuscripts: NF II, 301, 361, n. 41, for texts on demons who are *philanthrōpoi*.

form just described: The Latin has only *praedictae*, omitted by Scott III, 31–2, but retained in NF II, 301, with *speciei* as implied referent, which gives "avec ⟨le genre⟩ qu'on a dit" if *species* is taken to represent *genos*, as above; cf. section 2, note on "forms."

mind … divinity: On *nous*, *gnōsis* and divinization, see above: *C.H.* I. 1, 26; IV.3; X.9–10; XII.6.

demons attains their: The genitive *daemonum* occurs where one would expect the accusative *daemonas* as object of *accedit* ("attains"), although the genitive would be correct in the analogous Greek construction: above, *Asclep*. 1; Scott III, 33; NF II, 301.

6 ***Because of this … happier:*** Festugière (FR II, 87–9) compares this section with *C.H.* XI. 19–20 and with Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.4.11–18, on mankind's godlike grandeur, and Ferguson (Scott IVF, 397–8) contrasts it with *S.H.* XXIII.44–6; Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 16, 49, cites an Egyptian parallel. Scott III, 35, believes that the implicit comparison here is between the human and demonic natures and that the happier state attributed to humanity contradicts the view elsewhere in the *Hermetica* that embodiment was a disaster; see also: *C.H.* VIII.5, X.24–5, XII.20; below, sections 8, 11, 14, 22–3; *A.D.* 8.7, 9.6; Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 25–6; Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 17–18.

despises inwardly … earthly: The Hermetic praise of human dignity stops short at the bodily side of the human condition; above, *C.H.* I.18–19.

relation to them: Like the Greek *anankaios*, the Latin *necessarium* - here represented by "relation" – can signify either a connection or a necessity; Festugière, who gives "auxquels il se sait lié," notes that a translation in

the latter sense is also justified by the third sentence of section 5, above; NF II, 301, 361, n. 46.

swiftly mixes … elements: For *elementis velocitate miscetur*, Festugière has "il se mêle aux éléments par la vitesse de la pensée," connecting *velocitate* with the subsequent phrase, *acumine mentis* ("keenness of his mind"): NF II, 302, 362, n. 48; FR IV, 75, 145; Scott IVF, 398.

ensouled … without soul: Ferguson (Scott IVF, 374, 395) identifies *pneuma* as the root that reaches "from on high." On plants as soulless, see above, sections 4–5, as well as NF II, 362, nn. 49–50, and Scott III, 36–7, who both refer to the *phuton ... ouranion* in *Timaeus* 90A; cf. "the supercelestial plants that are our souls" in *C.H.* XVIII.11.

composite food: "Composite" renders *duplicibus* in contrast to *simplicibus*, but NF II, 302, has "de deux sortes … d'une seule sorte"; see also: below, section 7; Scott III, 37–8, IVF, 399.

one for the soul: "Soul" usually represents *anima*, parallel to the feminine *psuchē* in Greek; Reitzenstein (NF II, 303) emended *animi* here to *animae*, but for *animus* as "soul," see *OLD* s.v. *animus* 1. Iversen, *Doctrine*, p. 50, cites "a direct Egyptian parallel" for the distinction between the soul's nourishment and the body's.

stirring of the world: NF II, 303, 362, n. 51, gives "ciel" for *mundi* ("world") here, but see above, sections 2 and 3; "stirring" – according to Ferguson (Scott IVF, 359) "the perpetual movement of the sky that keeps life in being" – here and elsewhere represents *agitatio*, *agito*, etc.

spirit that fills: The Greek term behind the Latin *spiritus* is *pneuma*, on which see: *C.H.* I.5; Scott III, 37–8.

consciousness … aether: On *sensus* as "consciousness" see above, section 3, and on the Peripatetic sources of the doctrine that the quintessence rather than the four elements is the material fundament of *psuchē* or *nous*, see Scott III, 38–42; NF II, 363, nn. 53–4; cf. *A.D.* 11.6; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 405. NF II, 303, prefers *sola* ("only") to *soli*, which is Scott's reading (I, 296–7), agreeing with *homini* ("humanity") and giving "bestowed on humanity alone."

a little later: NF II, 364, n. 57, identifies this as a reference to sections 16 and 32; cf. Scott III, 42–3.

7 ***beginning … conjunction:*** The topic of *coniunctio* arose above in sections 1 and 5; cf. NF II, 364, n. 59.

Is … Trismegistus: Similar questions are asked elsewhere in the *Hermetica*: *C.H.* I.22, IV.3, X.23; Scott III, 44; NF II, 364, n. 61.
in their minds: For *in mentibus* NF II, 303, 364, n. 64, has "dans lesâmes"; above, sections 3 and 5.
about spirit: The discussion of *spiritus* occurs in section 16, below; NF II, 364, n. 65; above, section 6.
Mankind is … ousiōdēs: Scott III, 44, refers to *C.H.* I.15 where the adjective coresponding to *duplex* ("twofold") is *diploos*, though one might also write "composite" as in section 6, above; see also sections 7–10 below for other versions of *homo duplex*, with the comments of Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 18–19. Note that *ousiōdēs* here and *hulikon* below appear in Greek; for the "essential" human and other uses of *ousiōdēs*, see: *C.H.* I.15; II.5; IX.1, 5; XIII.14; *Asclep.* 19; Scott III, 44; NF II, 364, nn. 67, 69; FR IV, 6; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 420. For other instances of Greek words left untranslated and untransliterated in the Latin text, see below, sections 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 39 and 40 for *ousiōdēs, kosmos, arithmētikē, hulē, Haidēs, ousia, ousiarchēs, Pantomorphos, Heimarmenē;* also above, note on title.
divine likeness: Scott III, 45, points out that Gen. 1:26 was known beyond the Jewish and Christian readership of the Old Testament, but he also suggests Platonic sources such as *Phaedo* 95C, while showing that some pagans, like Celsus, rejected the idea that mankind was made in God's image; above, section 6; below, sections 10–11; Hoffmann, *Celsus*, p. 103.
hulikos … fourfold: The word "earthly" translates *mundanum*, on which see above, section 2; mankind's material part is *quadruplex* because of the four elements: above, section 6; Scott III, 45–6; NF II, 364, n. 68; Gersh, *Platonism*, I, p. 381.
***in the world*:** For *in mundo* NF II, 304, has "dans la matière"; above, section 2; FR III, 63.

8 ***When the … own divinity:*** Lactantius, calling his source the *Logos teleios*, cited this long sentence in Greek in *Divine Institutes* 4.6.4 to prove that Hermes agreed with the prophets and Sibyls that the supreme God had a son. The same Greek text occurs in pseudo- Anthimus, *To Theodore on the Holy Church* 10–11, which Scott assigns on internal evidence to the middle of the fourth century CE, half a century after the death of the real Anthimus, bishop of Nicomedia. Scott traces the passage

to *Timaeus* 29E-31B, 37C, 92C, and compares it with Gen. 1. He also notes its appearance in the famous pavement relief of the Cathedral of Siena (1488) where Hermes appears among the ten Sibyls. See: above, Title; Scott I, 32, III, 46–8, IV, 15–16, 155, 158–9; Yates, *Bruno*, pp. 42–3; Siniscalco (1966–7), pp. 114–16; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 55. NF II, 305, following Rohde, emends *quo* in the manuscripts to *quom* ("when"), an unusual form in the *Asclepius* for the conjunction *cum*, corresponding to *epei* in Lactantius, *eti* in pseudo-Anthimus; Scott I, 298–9, IV, 15, 158, following Goldbacher, suggests *quoniam*.

we shall discuss: Scott III, 46–7, locates the response to this promise in *C.H.* IX.6, which says that "in the cosmos sensation and understanding are one," and he observes that the first sentence of the ninth treatise describes itself as "a sequel" to "the perfect discourse," i.e., the *Logos teleios*. Hence, concludes Scott, the parenthetical material in section 8 must have been inserted after *C.H.* IX was written; see also NF II, 284–5, 365, n. 72; cf. Zielinski (1905), p. 335.

seemed beautiful … to be another: Scott III, 47–8, reads *visusque ei pulcher* ("seemed beautiful to him") in light of such phrases as *eiden ho theos to phōs hoti kalon* ("God saw the light, that it was fair") in LXX Gen. 1:4, 8, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; "progeny" renders *partum*, an emendation of *partem* (NF II, 305) confirmed by *tokon* in Lactantius and pseudo-Anthimus (Scott IV, 16, 158); "to be" is *esse*, which W. Kroll and Nock prefer to *esset* in the manuscripts; see also: *C.H.* I. 12; *Asclep.* 7; NF II, 365 n. 73.

will is … achievement: NF II, 365, n. 76, cites *C.H.* X.2: "god's activity (*energeia*) is will (*thelēsis*)"; and XIII.19: "your counsel (*boulē*) goes forth from you." For God's will in Albinus, see Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, p. 284, n. 2, who cites Plato, *Laws* 967A. See also FR III, 159, and for Egyptian sources, Iversen, *Doctrine*, p. 49, and Mahé, *Hermès* II, 292, as in *C.H.* I.8.

⟨had made⟩ … material wrapping: Nock (NF II, 305), following Scott (I, 300, III, 49), fills a lacuna with *fecisset* ("had made"). For *ousiōdēs* see above, section 7. Festugière (NF II, 305, 365, n. 77) translates *mundano integimento* ("material wrapping") as "enveloppe matérielle," pointing out that the *Asclepius* here takes an optimistic attitude toward issues treated quite differently elsewhere; "world" represents *mundus* three

times in the next paragraph; above, section 2; *C.H.* X.13, 17–18; Festugière, *HMP*, p. 78; FR III, 36, 74–6; Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 383–4.
commanded … ***governing them:*** Scott (IV, 23; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 15) connects this passage with the Greek fragment in Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.13.3, but Ferguson (IVF, 483–4) refers to *C.H.* XIV.4; NF IV, 114; "worshipping" corresponds to *adorare*, Nock's correction, following Rohde, of *orare* in the manuscripts; "tending" gives *incolere* the sense of *colere* rather than the usual "inhabit": NF II, 306, 366, nn. 79–80; Scott III, 50; Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 95–7; *C.H.* IV.2.
agriculture … ***arts and sciences:*** Above, section 6, "Because of this."

9 ***Except for*** … ***nor ⟨mortal⟩*:** As Scott indicates, this claim for the uniqueness of human worship is contradicted in *C.H.* I.26 and XIII. 15. Following W. Kroll, Nock supplies *mortalium*, missing in the manuscripts; NF II, 307.
Muses: Citing Martianus Capella 2.125, Carcopino (*Rome*, pp. 277- 83), maintains that Euterpe was the special Hermetic Muse and that the middle syllable of her name could signify a triple blessing from Hermes Trismegistus, as in *C.H.* I.31.
pure mind … ***lower reach:*** NF II, 307, has "âme pure" for *pura mente*, but cf. Scott III, 93; Moreschini, *Studi*, pp. 88–93; and sections 3, 5, 7 above. The manuscripts read *interiorem*, which Nock emends to *inferiorem* ("lower reach"), inserting *in* ("at") before it.

10 ***theory that follows:*** For *rationem vero tractatus istius*, NF II, 308, has "Quant au sujet que je vais traiter maintenant," marking the beginning of a new document, as Ferguson suggests (Scott IVF, 401), which ends with the third sentence of section 14; above, *C.H.* I.32, on *paradosis*; cf. *Asclep*. Title, 1, 16, 19, 20, 27, 33, 37.
master … ***first god:*** NF II, 308, has "Dieu, maître de l'éternité" for *aeternitatis dominus deus*, but cf. 366, n. 88 and FR IV, 168.
what is composite: For *conpositi*, NF II, 308, has "le monde formé par Dieu."
ornaments … ***ordered world*:** The words "well ordered" are not in the Latin, but in this context, where *mundus* is compared to *kosmos*, the Latin clearly suggests the puns and ambiguities deriving from the various

meanings of *kosmos*, on which see: *C.H.* IV.1–2; *Asclep*. 2; NF II, 366, nn. 90–1; FR I, 93–4, III, 74; Scott III, 54; Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 386–7.
mankind's divine: Reading *hominis* ("mankind's") for *omnis* with Nock and previous editors; NF II, 308.
Mankind knows … and honoring: Knowledge of the world leads humanity closer to God: cf. *C.H.* VIII.5, X.9–10, XIII.9; NF II, 366, nn. 92–3; Nock (1925), p. 27; Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 24–7.
his image … images: "If man is an image of the Kosmos," writes Scott (III, 55), "and the Kosmos is an image of God, man must be 'a second image of God,'" citing *C.H.* V.2, VIII.2, XI.15, XII.15; cf. above, section 7; below, section 11; NF II, 367, nn. 94–5; Moreschini, *Studi*, p. 143.
soul and consciousness … water and air: Following similar additions by Scott and Ferguson, NF II, 308, inserts *et terra* ("and earth") before *aqua* ("water"). Ferguson (Scott IVF, 402–3) sets forth the parallels among four sets of material and immaterial entities in this and succeeding sections, describing the whole as "the theory of the microcosm in a peculiar Hermetic setting." As they appear in this translation, the four sets are:

1. soul, consciousness, spirit, reason (*anima, sensus, spiritus*, *ratio);*
2. fire, earth, water, air (*ignis, terra, aqua, aër);*
3. hands, feet, other bodily members (*manus, pedes, alia corporis membra);*
4. thought, consciousness, memory, foresight (*animus, sensus*, *memoria, providentia*);

Ferguson links *sensus*, in its first appearance here, with *nous*, but he connects the second instance of *sensus* with *aisthēsis* ("sensation"), basing his analysis on Philo, *Questions on Genesis* 3.5, 4.3, and *Who is the Heir* 125–32. See also: NF II, 367, nn. 96–7; *C.H.* XI.7, XII.21, XIII.7–12. The phrase "in his material part" translates *parte vero mundana;* above, section 2.

11 ***sum … standard:*** Einarson (NF II, 367, n. 98) suggests that in the phrase *mensura eius utriusque* the last two words may represent *tou sunamphoterou*, and Festugière (*ibid*.) relates *mensura* to *kanōn*, but

Scott (III, 56) suggests *metron* "in the sense of *summetria* or *harmonia*, i. e., the due proportion … of the two parts to one another."
fortified … ***disdain***: Above, *C.H.* XIII. 1 and NF II, 368, n. 99.
To name … ***name possessions****:* Some editors have deleted one of the two occurrences of *possessionum nomine nuncupantur*. Festugière (NF II, 309, 368, n. 100) thinks that the writer had in mind an etymology for *possessio* from *post* and *sido*, but *possideo* comes from *potis* and *sedeo* ("sit") while *possido* ("take hold of") comes from *potis* and *sido* ("sit down"); *OLD* s. vv. *possideo*, *possido*,
even the body*:* Above, sections 6–7, 10; *C.H.* I.18–19.
aim of the argument: Rose (1947), p. 103, speculates that *rationis intentio* ("aim of the argument") may represent *logou taxis* ("order of theory"), perhaps confused with *tasis* ("force" or "intensity").
⟨*human*⟩ … ***lower world*:** The word *homo* occurs only once in the text, but see NF II, 309, 368, n. 103; Nock and other editors read *inferioris* ("lower") for *interioris* in the manuscripts; above, section 1, on "four men" and *C.H.* I.12, on *anthrōpos*.
pairs … ***foresight:*** Scott III, 58, thinks that this sentence is an elaboration of material mistakenly transposed from section 10, above; NF II, 368, n. 104.
searching warily: NF II, 310, 368, n. 105, has "scrute avec une inquiète curiosité" for *suspiciosa indagatione*, pointing out that "*suspiciosa* can also mean 'a curiosity contented with opinions, conjectures …,' implying a high degree of uncertainty."
if he … ***orderly way:*** The manuscripts have *eumque conpetenter munde mundum servando*, but NF II, 310, following W. Kroll, deletes *conpetenter*, which appears again below with *parentem* ("complying duly"). On *munde mundum* ("worldly order … orderly") see above, sections 2, 10; FR III, 74.
arranges the scene: NF II, 368, n. 107, thinks that *conponit* ("arranges") represents *kosmei*, another pun on *kosmos* as described above, section 10; for *species* as "scene," *OLD* s.v. *species* 1, 4.
our parents … ***worldly custody:*** For other remarks on the ancestors of Hermes and Asclepius, see above, *C.H.* X.5, below, section 37. "Fidelity" represents *pietas*, on which see above, section 1, and the passage from Augustine's *City of God* 10.1 cited by Scott III, 59; cf. Nock (1934), pp.

367–8. Festugière has "déchargés de la garde du monde matériel," but cf. NF II, 310, 368, nn. 108–9.

12 **W *hat … Trismegistus:*** NF II, 311, points out that the allocation of speeches in section 12 to Trismegistus and Asclepius is uncertain.

vile migration … ***bodies***: NF II, 311, 369, n. Ill, connects *indigna*("unworthy") with *migratio* as a feminine nominative singular, but Scott III, 60–1, links it to *alia corpora* ("other bodies") as a neuter plural. For other discussions of the transmigration of souls, see: C.H. II.17, X.7–8, 19–22; FR III, 122. Mahé (1981), p. 406, contrasts this punishment with the penalty in section 28.

earthly … ***eternity to come***: "Earthly" is *mundana* (above, section 2); NF II, 311, 369, n. 112, translates *aeternitatis* by "immortalité" to emphasize that it is a special gift to the reverent.

malice that begrudges: For *invidens immortalitati malignitas* Festugière gives "le vice, jaloux de l'immortalité," and Nock speculates that *malignitas* represents *kakia*; for the vice *phthonos*, see above, *C.H.* IV. 3, XIII.7–9; NF II, 311, 369, n. 114.

simple regard for philosophy*:* For the Platonic and Christian sides of this anti-intellectualism, which extends through section 14 but contrasts with sections 6, 8 and 10, see Scott III, 63–7; NF II, 369, n. 115; Festugière, *Religion*, pp. 132–4; FR I, 65–6, 357; II, 151–2; III, 85. J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 326–7, 352–4, characterizes the Hermetic attitude as "the theologizing of philosophy." Kroll identifies Posidonius as the Stoic-Platonic source of such sentiments as "he worships God who knows him" in Seneca, *Letter* 95.47, and Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.61.153, "[it is] the knowledge of the gods from which reverence (*pietas*) arises"; Bousset (1914), pp. 142–8, interprets the Hermetic exaltation of piety over philosophy as a striking reversal of Seneca's position; above, C.H. V.3, IX.4, X.4; Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 95–7. Cumont, *Egypte*, pp. 121–3, 164, discusses the special sense of *philosophos* in Hermetic astrology. For the only mention of the word *mageia* ("magic") in the *Hermetica* edited by Nock and Festugière, see *S.H.* XXIII.68: "No prophet about to raise his hands to the gods has ever ignored any of the things that are, so that philosophy and magic (*philosophia men kai mageia*) may nourish the soul and medicine heal (*sōzē*) the body." Labhardt (1960), pp. 214–20, analyzes *curiositas*, *simplicitas*, *philosophia* and related words in

connection with magic and religion; see also Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, pp. 47–8, 248–9.

13 ***recurrence:*** For *apocatastasis* see below, section 31; above, *C.H.* I.17, VIII.4, XI.2; Scott III, 65–6; NF II, 369, n. 116.
music is: NF II, 312, follows previous editions in emending *esse* to *est* ("is").
song … ***concord*:** NF II, n. 119, identifies the concordant song as the music of the spheres; *conlatus* ("marshalling") is an emendation of *conlata* in NF II, 312, and older editions.

14 ***curious thinking:*** Above, section 12, "simple regard."
our account … ***treatment:*** Above, section 10, note on "theory."
hulē … ***were in god***: Thinking of the first words of John's Gospel, Braun (*Jean*, pp. 288–90) divides the text to form the following sentence: *Exordium fuit deus et hulē*, but NF II, 313, puts *exordium* ("begin" in my translation) at the end of the previous sentence. Here and at many other points, Braun hears echoes in the *Asclepius* of John's language and ideas, concluding that "the author of the Hermetic treatises knew the Gospel's doctrine and set forth his own in order either to show what Hermetism offered as equivalent or to oppose it to what he found absurd in the … Evangelist." Among the possible connections between the *Asclepius* and John that Braun proposes, see: section 2 (John 1:4); 6 (1:12); 10 (1:3); 11 (15:12); 14 (1:1, 4, 18; 4:23); 8 (3:16); 18 (1:4); 22 (1:12; 6:50); 25 (3:19; 5:40; 4:23); 28 (16:8, 10); 34 (1:3); Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 17, 24–7, 155, 420, says much less about the *Asclepius* than about the Greek treatises.

Festugière points out that the writer could have used *materia* (cf. sections 15, 16, 19) or *silva* as the equivalent of *hulē* but chose *mundus* ("matter") instead (cf. section 2); in the same sentence, however, Scott argued that the last occurrence of *mundus* ("world") must represent *kosmos*, and Nock suggests that the second *deus* ("god") in the sentence might be corrupt: above, section 2; *C.H.* I.6, XIII.2; NF II, 313, 370, n. 124; Scott III, 82.
Because … ***not come to be:*** For *quanta* in some manuscripts and *quando* in others NF II, 313, following Thomas, reads *quia* ("because") *nata* ("come to be"); above, section 4, for *nascor* and *gignomai*.

not produce being … from themselves: The usual variation (above, section 4) on "come to be" is unsuitable for *non nata* here; NF II, 313, 370, n. 127, has "sans génération," and Scott III, 83–6, interprets the passage as explaining the senses of *agennētos* ("ungenerating," "ungenerable," "ungenerated") and discusses *autogennētos* ("self-generated") as a divine attribute in Egyptian theology, as when Re appears as Khephry, the beetle. Commenting on *NHC* VI.6.57.13–18, 63.21–3, Mahé (*Hermes* I, 47–52, 110) shows the importance of the triad *agennētos*, *autogennētos*, *gennētos* ("ungenerated," "self-generated," "generated") in the speculations of the Gnostic Peratae recorded by Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.12.1–17; in the *Gospel of the Egyptians (NHC III*. 2.54.13–18); and in Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.2.261–5.268, which is a discussion of Egyptian theology. Among the Peratae, the triad was the first to be divided from the original source; it contained an ungenerated father, self-generated powers and generated forms. Mahé considers these parallel to the One, the Monad and the Indivisible in Iamblichus. Between this group and the Ogdoad, Iamblichus placed *Emēph* (Kneph?) and a demiurgic Mind called Amun, Ptah, Hephaistos and Osiris, specifying that Hermes, as well as Bitus prophesying to Ammon, connected this metaphysical theology with theurgy. See also: below, section 19; Scott IVF, 405; NF II, 371, n. 127; Layton, *GS*, 32–3, 127–9, 167–8; Fowden, *EH*, pp. 136–41, 152–3.

***in the quality … conceiving*:** Festugière gives "du nombre des propriétés de la matière" for *in qualitate naturae*, taking *naturae* as the equivalent of *hulēs*; he also renders *vim atque materiam* ("the power and the material") by "le pouvoir et la capacité foncière," connecting *materia* with *ousia* and *phusis:* NF II, 314, 371, nn. 129–30.

15 ***divided … whole of nature*** : Festugière, who gives "délimités" for *discernenda* ("divided"), interprets the passage to mean that sexuality implies division, which in turn requires location in some place; thus, since sexual coming-to-be presupposes place, place does not come to be – it is *agennētos*. Festugière sees no need for correction in this part of the sentence, but Scott and Ferguson disagree, and Nock tentatively interpolates *loco* before *discernenda*. Commenting on the latter part of the sentence, however, where he gives "génération universelle" for *totius naturae* ("whole of nature"), Festugière writes that "the whole passage is

extremely difficult"; rendering *naturae* by "génération" is analogous to interpreting *nascor* as "come to be": NF II, 314, 371, nn. 133–4; Scott III, 88; IVF, 406; *Asclep*. 4, 14. Mahé (1981), p. 406, points out the contradiction between the treatment of space here and below, section 34.

although matter: The Latin for "matter" here is *mundus*\ above, section 2.

natures of all things*:* The Latin is *omnium naturas*, for which NF II, 314, has "le principe de toute génération," in keeping with the translation explained above.

malice: Festugière reasonably renders *malignitatis* as "le mal," but cf. "the ungrudging light" (*to phōs aphthonon*) in *C.H.* XVI.5; also, "jealousy" above, in section 1; *OLD* s.v. *malignitas*, 1, 2; Festugière notes other Hermetic views on the status of the material world: *C.H.* VI.2–4, VII.3, IX.4, X.15, XIV.7; NF II, 314, 371–2, n. 135.

16 ***deigned*** … ***gifts:*** For *sensu*, *disciplina*, *intellegentia* ("consciousness, learning and understanding"), Festugière has "d'intellect, de science et d'entendement," explaining that they probably correspond to *nous*, *epistēmē* and *gnōsis* or *logos*; for *mentes* ("minds") he has "âmes," in agreement with Ferguson. For *epistēmē* as learning, see below, section 23; above, *C.H.* X.9–10; God's gift of *nous* raises humans above the level of *epistēmē* and puts them on the path to *gnōsis*. See: NF II, 315, 372, nn. 136–7; Scott III, 90–1, IVF, 406.

understanding and foresight: The Latin is *intellegentia prudentiaque*, for which Festugière has "la sagesse et la prudence," pointing out that *prudentia* may represent *pronoia*, on which see above, *C.H.* I.19. Scott III, 91, explains that both virtues may be taken as divine qualities in mankind, in which case "prudence" is also appropriate.

Spirit supplies … ***these issues:*** On "spirit" see above, *C.H.* I .5; below, section 17; and Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 361–3; "supplies" assumes that *ministrantur* represents some form of *epichorēgeō*, but cf. NF II, 315, 373, n. 138, for the possibility of *dioikeō* or *diakoneō* ("govern" or "minister"); "these issues" represents *haec*, which Nock, following Thomas, inserts before *hactenus* ("for now"); above, section 10, on "theory."

by mind alone: See FR IV, 61, on God's knowability; also Gersh, *Platonism*, I, 339–40.

all the matter: Although "matter" is usually *mundus* above, here it is *materiam*, for which NF II, 315, 373, n. 142, gives "nature"; above, sections 2, 14.

17 ***⟨spirit⟩ stirs and concentrates:*** The verbs "stirs and concentrates" represent nouns, *agitatio atque frequentatio*, which are parallel gramatically to *receptaculum* ("receives"), which refers to *hulē vel mundus ("hulē* or matter"), but because stirring and concentrating require an agent more active than matter, Scott (III, 195) supplies *spiritus*; cf. NF II, 316, 373, n. 144; Gersh, *Platonism*, I, 356; above, section 2.

breathing: NF II, 316, following Thomas, reads *inhalata* for *inaltata* or *inalata* in the manuscripts.

world … ***see bottom:*** Festugière (NF II, 373, nn. 145–6) notes the usual ambiguity of *mundus* (world/matter) and hence the applicability of what follows to the geometry of the world and/or the ontology of matter; above, section 2. He agrees with Ferguson (Scott IVF, 407) that the unseeable "bottom" might be the center of the sphere or else its lower half; in either case, the sphere would seem to be solid or opaque. See also Scott III, 125.

same quality as place: Following Thomas, NF II, 316, emends *locis* to *loci*.

shapes … ***imprinted*****:** In the phrase *formas ... specierum* ("shapes of forms"), NF II, 316, 373, n. 145, explains that *forma* is more concrete than in the first sentence of the paragraph, where *qualitatis vel formae* refers ambiguously to *mundus* as world or as matter; "imprinted" translates *insculpta*, suggesting a family of images used by philosophers from Plato through Descartes and after to describe the form/matter relation; above, section 2, on "forms." More abstractly, *insculpta* might mean "represented," which better suits the end of the sentence.

if … ***is called Haidēs:*** NF II, 316, 374, n. 148, suggests rearranging two words (*vel pars*) marked unintelligible in the text, noting also that the derivation of *Haidēs* (negative *a* + *idein* = "not to see") was traditional since Plato, *Cratylus* 404B; *Gorgias* 493B; *Phaedo* 80D; *Timaeus* 5IA. Ferguson (Scott IVF, 406–7) cites Lydus, *On Months* 4.159: "The writers on nature say that the whole of matter is shapeless (*aneideon*) before the eventual coming to be of order, whence the philosophers also say that matter is *Haidēs* and *Tartaros* because by nature it is turbulent (*tarattomenēn*) and unquiet in its shapelessness." Lewy, *Oracles*, pp.

296–7, disputes Ferguson's contention that the author of the *Asclepius* "identified Hades with Hyle."

because … **⟨*regions*⟩**: "Because" represents *quod*, a correction of *quo* accepted by Nock from a scribe and early editors; "regions" follows Festugière's suggestion that *priventur* ("deprived"), which has no stated subject in the manuscripts, requires another *inferi*; he also believes that this sentence was added by the Latin translator: NF II, 316, 374, n. 149.

18 ***"material." Matter:*** The former word is *mundana*, the latter *mundus*; Festugière thinks that *mundana* may represent either *kosmikē* ("cosmic") or *hulikē* ("material"); NF II, 317, 374, n. 150; cf. Scott III, 100; above, sections, 2, 14.

have the mind: All three occurrences of *mens* ("mind") in this paragraph are "âme" in NF II, 317, 374, n. 153; above, sections 3, 5, 7; and *C.H.* IV.3–4, on which people have *nous* and *logos* and what these terms imply.

sun lights … ***illuminates:*** NF II, 374, n. 152, explains the point of the imagery: *sensus* ("consciousness" or *nous*) is a faculty of intuition, of gazing into the divine, which requires enlightenment; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, p. 164.

***soul … is consciousness*:** Following Thomas, NF II, 317, emends *sensus* to *sensum*.

19 ***disclosing … mysteries*:** Below, sections 21, 32, 37; above, 1, 10; *C.H.* I.32.

***many kinds of gods*:** Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 373–6, interprets similarities between the subsequent account of divine hierarchy and the views of Porphyry, Iamblichus and Sallustius as the product of common influence from the *Chaldaean Oracles*.

***discourse … effort*:** For "discourse" (*ratio*) and *logos*, see above, *C.H.* I.6, VIII. 1, XII. 12; Scott IVF, 411; above, section 10, note on "theory."

***take in … speak*:** NF II, 318, following Thomas, writes *loquentis* (literally, "of the one speaking") *acceperis* ("take in") where the manuscripts have *loquentia* (or *loquentias) acceperit*.

***heads of all classes … head-⟨of⟩-ousia*:** "Classes" ("espèces" in NF II, 318, 375, n. 157) is *specierum*, on which see above, section 2; "head-⟨of⟩-ousia" translates the emendation of *princeps ousia* to *princeps ousias*,

assuming that the two words together represent the unfamilar *ousiarchēs*, as it appears below. In Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.2.262, note the expression *archē tēs ousias* in the context of a discussion of Egyptian theology: "From this one god the self-sufficient god shines himself forth, and this is why he is self-sufficient and self-fathering, for he is head and god of gods, monad from the one, pro-essence and head of essence (*archē tēs ousias)*… . These then are the most ancient heads of all things that Hermes puts before aetherial and empyrean gods as well as the heavenly." Scott (III, 113–14, IV, 32, 56–8) thinks that the neologism *ousiarchēs* is actually a translation of an Egyptian word, on the pattern of other unusual terms (*noētarchēs*, *ousiopatõr*) used by Iamblichus. Lewy, *Oracles*, p. 234, compares *chronoarchēs*, "lord of time," in Psellus, *On Demons* 7 (881B-C).

This and the preceding paragraph begin with the distinction between hypercosmic intelligible gods and cosmic sensible gods. The former are *ousiarchai*, heads-of-essence, and the latter follow them ontologically and cosmologically: a lower sensible god has as its head-of-essence, as the source and center of its being, a higher intelligible god, who is the head of a *seira* or *taxis* (see below). The manuscripts name five *ousiarchai*: Jupiter, Light, *Pantomorphos*, *Heimarmenē*, and a Second (God? Jupiter?); following them come five sensible gods: Heaven, Sun, the thirty-six Decans, the seven planetary Spheres, and the Air. However, since the latter series is interrupted by a lacuna, it may be that other pairs of intelligible and sensible gods followed. Scott III, 107–15, for example, adjusts the above scheme by omitting Sun and Light and adding the two Jupiters who appear below in section 26. Thus, he makes Zeus (*Hupatos*) the ousiarch of Heaven, *Pantomorphos* of the Decans, *Heimarmenē* of the Spheres, Zeus (*Neatos*) of the sublunar Atmosphere, and Zeus *Chthonios* of Earth and Water. Scott identifies similar cosmological structures in Stoicism, perhaps Posidonius, and in the Platonist Xenocrates, but Festugière (*HMP*, pp. 121–30) rejects both Scott's view that *ousia* here represents Stoic corporeal substance and Gilbert Murray's interpretation of *ousia* as Platonic intelligible essence. Instead, he looks to Iamblichus (see above) for whom *ousia* "designates divine entities of the second order, visible cosmic gods who … have as their Principles intelligible [gods] who … dwell in them and govern them." Festugière also cites Proclus, Porphyry, the *Chaldaean Oracles* and other texts to show how

cosmic and hypercosmic links were connected through chains (*nexus, seirai*) of correspondence, a theme that also appears in *Asclep*. 3–5 and 23; cf. *C.H.* I.25, XVI.15–16; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 39–41; Scott IVF, 411–13; Gersh, *Platonism*, I, 334–5, 377–9.

***of heaven … all things*:** "Heaven" signifies a higher place than the material *ouranos*, according to Scott III, 117–18, and Jupiter here is *hupatos* ("highest") in contrast to the Jupiters who are *neatos* ("lowest") and *chthonios* ("subterranean") in section 27.

***supplies life … Light*:** Above, *C.H.* I.9; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 164–5.

***thirty-six … Pantomorphos*:** Scott III, 118–20, explains that the thirty-six are the Decans (above, *C.H.* XVI.13; *S.H.* VI) and that "horoscope," which normally meant a star or a portion of the zodiac rising at the time of someone's birth, is here synonymous with "Decan"; cf. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.3.264, 4.266; *PGM* XIII.520–2 (Betz, pp. 185–6). For *hōroskopoi* as a title for Egyptian priests, see Cumont, *Egypte*, pp. 124–5. *Pantomorphos* Scott takes to be the zodiac working through the Decans; for other instances of *pantomorphos* and *omniformis*, see below, section 35; *C.H.* XI.16, XIII.12, XVI.12; *S.H.* XXIII. 20. Nock's apparatus (NF II, 319) shows extensive editorial correction of the Greek in this section. See also: FR III, 162; Scott, IVF, 413; Nock (1939), p. 500; W. Gundel, *Dekane*, pp. 1–36, 41–5, 226–35, 344–5; H. Gundel, *Weltbild*, pp. 17–24; Gundel and Gundel, *Astrologumena*, pp. 17–18; Kákosy (1982), pp. 163–91.

***seven spheres … variation*:** Lydus, *On Months* 4.7, quotes a passage from the *Logos teleios* (above, sections 1, 8) corresponding to this sentence; for related material on *heimarmenē* taken by Lydus from the *Logos teleios*, see below, section 39. The word "heads" represents *sui principes*, which might also be taken as "heads-of-essence," according to Ferguson (Scott IVF, 412) and Festugière (NF II, 375, n. 159); see also Scott IV, 230.

***the second … to mortals*:** NF II, 319, notes that some editors have thought the lacuna that occurs here to be a large one; Scott III, 122, makes a connection with section 27 at this point.

***{reach … But …}*:** NF II, 319, marks this passage corrupt, noting a lacuna after *at de* ("but") identified by Goldbacher. The punctuation here follows Festugière's suggestion: NF II, 375, n. 163.

***the matter … the will*:** FR II, 68–9, sees the end of section 19 as presenting a dualism of divine will and matter, but he believes that the dualism is blurred in the equivocation of section 20, with its God who has no name and all names and is "one and all … the only and the all"; above, section 8; *C.H.* X.2.

20 ***this explanation*:** Above, section 10, note on "theory"; note that "explanation" (*ratio*) is repeated at the end of section 20.

***the sound … and ears*:** NF II, 320, following Einarson, takes this whole passage as parenthetical, and Scott III, 133, concludes that the materialist definition of speech, traceable to Stoic sources, would have rung false to Egyptian ears; cf. *C.H.* XVI. 1–2.

***includes meaning … from them*:** "Meaning" is *sensus*, which NF II, 321, translates as "l'impression sensible," preferring *aut de his* ("or from them") to *autem his* and similar manuscript readings; above, section 3.

***maker of all majesty*:** For *totius maiestatis effectorem* Festugière has "le créateur de la majesté du Tout," but see also the note on this passage: NF II, 321, 376, n. 170.

***nameless … names of everything*:** Nock follows Hildebrand's readings of *innominem* and *omninominem* ("nameless" and "all-named"); Festugière points out similar material in *C.H.* V.l, 9–10, and in pagan liturgical texts: NF II, 321, 375–6, nn. 167, 171; FR III, 66, 69; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, p. 50. Scott III, 134–5, argues that Hermetic and Christian writers took the idea of unnameable divinity from Egyptian sources, on which see also Daumas (1982), pp. 20–2; above, *C.H.* I.31; Gersh, *Platonism*, I, 341–3, stresses the Platonic background.

***fertility … procreate*:** For similar themes of androgyne and gravid divinity, see *C.H.* I.5, 9–15; V.7, 9; NF II, 376, nn. 173–5; Lewy, *Oracles*, p. 341; Mahé (1975a), pp. 131–2, 137–8. Like Mahé (*Hermès* II, 292), Scott (III, 135–42) cites Egyptian as well as Greek precedents for these ideas, suggesting that a bisexual God was anti-dualist and anti-ascetic. For positive views of sexuality and procreation, see *C.H.* II. 17, *Asclep*. 21.

***might provide*:** NF II, 321, following W. Kroll, corrects *sufficiat* to *sufficiant*.

***explanation given*:** Above, sections 1, 10, 14, 16, 19, and *C.H.* I.32 on *paradosis*.

21 ***of both sexes*:** Above, section 20, and *C.H.* I.9.

***soulless*:** For plants as soulless, see above, sections 4, 6, 8 and Scott III, 143, who provides ancient testimony on plant sexuality.

***{that … world}*:** Nock obelizes the nine words beginning *in naturam et* in his text, and Festugière translates the emendation by Rose given in the apparatus – *in natura esse* ("are also in the nature"); NF II, 322, 376, n. 179; Scott IVF, 416.

***Grasp* … *mystery of*:** "Grasp" translates *percipito*, Bradwardine's emendation of *percepto*, and "master" represents *domino*, W. Kroll's correction of *omni*, both accepted in NF II, 322, 376, n. 180, where Festugière discusses and then dismisses the possibility that "mystery of procreation" might refer to a matrimonial sacrament. According to Scott (III, 143–5) "the Hermetist here confines his attention chiefly to the act of procreation," and Mahé (*Hermès* II, 212; [1975a], 131–3) identifies the sexual mystery with the androgyne god (above, section 20) made manifest in the sexual act. *PGM* XXXVI.305–6 (Betz, p. 276) refers to copulation as "the mystery rite of Aphrodite," and Epiphanius (*Panarion* 26.9.6–7; Layton, *GS*, p. 210) claimed that the Phibionite Gnostics aimed to achieve divinization by ritual sex; cf. Pagels, *Eve*, pp. 25, 62–71. Even Eph. 5:32, commenting on the passage about marriage in Matt. 19:5, asserts that "this is a great mystery," but then goes on to refer the *mustērion* "to Christ and the church," thus opening the way to asexual allegorizing. On these and related points, see also: *C.H.* I.16; *Asclep*. 19, 32, 37; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 310–19; NF II, 376–7, n. 180; Parrott, *NHC* VI, p. 400.

***One should explain*:** From these words (*Et dicendum foret*) through the end of the third sentence of section 29 (*tutatur malis*), a Coptic version of the *Perfect Discourse* - closer, in Mahé's view, than the *Asclepius* to the Greek original – is preserved in *NHC* VI.8: Mahé, *Hermès* II, 147–207; (1975a), 130–2; (1981), 305–27, 405–34; Parrott, *NHC* VI, pp. 395–451. Mahé reconstructs the beginning of this section in the Greek original from *C.H.* V.6, XI.14, XII.21 and XIV.9–10, attributing a broad unity to the whole Coptic text (as well as the corresponding sections of the *Asclepius*) as a statement on theodicy, despite its fragmentary nature.

***snatches … coupling*:** NF II, 322–3, adopts Housman's insertion of "love" (*venerem*) from Vergil, *Geòrgie* 3.137, as well as Thomas's reading of *communi et* for *communiat* or *communi* in the manuscripts.

Sexual union is called "Cupid or Venus" at the beginning of this section, and on Aphrodite, see above, note on "mystery."

***potency … act of this mystery*:** Mahé, *Hermès* I, 90, II, 211, takes *virtus* ("potency") and *effectus* ("act") as reflecting the Aristotelian relation between *dunamis* and *energeia*, citing *C.H.* X.22, XI.5, XII. 21–2 and other texts in his commentary on *NHC* VI.6.52.14–20; Mahé (1975a), pp. 128–30.

22 ***whole world … cure*:** For *mundi totius* ("whole world") NF II, 323, has "tout ce qui est matière," which corresponds roughly to the Greek suggested by Scott III, 146, *pantōn tōn hulikōn*, but see Mahé, *Hermès* II, 213–14, for the translation here; "cure" represents *medela*, a scribal correction of *medulla* adopted by Nock and confirmed by the Coptic; Mahé (1974a), p. 148.

***all vices thrive … poisoned*:** Mahé, *Hermès* II, 215, points out that the Latin, here and in sections 28-9 (*NHC* VI.8.77–8), is less interested than the Coptic in physical punishment, concentrating more on ethical and psychological issues.

***remedy of learning*:** Here and elsewhere in this section, "learning" represents *disciplina*, for which NF II, 323, uses "science," seeming to associate it with *gnōsis*, although Scott, III, 146, shows an instance where *dianoia* would correspond to *disciplina*, of which the usual Greek equivalent is *epistēmē*, as above, section 16. Mahé, *Hermès* II, 213, 216, believes that *gnōsis* and *epistēmē* are essentially synonymous in *NHC* VI.8.65–7, noting also that the Coptic at this point asserts that the god who gives mankind *gnōsis* is not responsible for human evil.

***corrupt part … divine*:** Here and in the next sentence "matter" translates *mundi*\ above, sections 2, 14. Scott III, 147–8, speculates that a Stoic materialist conception of soul might have influenced the Hermetic author but thinks it more likely that when "he speaks of the rational soul as composed of a kind of 'matter' … he means the phrase metaphorically." Commenting on Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 8.5.267–7.270, Scott IV, 72–9, cites a number of texts in the Platonic tradition on the two-souls doctrine; note that Iamblichus traces the idea of a higher soul originating from the First Intelligible and a lower soul coming from the turning of the spheres (and hence subject to *Heimarmenē*) to "Hermetic conceptions," shortly after having introduced the prophet Bitus, who explained the

Hermetic theology "to King Ammon after having found it carved in hieroglyphics in a sanctuary of Sais in Egypt." Ferwerda (1983), pp. 360–78, who traces the two-souls doctrine through a number of pagan and Christian sources, identifies "the Hermetics, the Gnostics … Porphyry and Numenius" as its main proponents. See also: above, *C.H.* I.15, XVI.15; NF IV, 114–16; Nock (1939), pp. 500–1; Boyancé (1967), p. 348; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, pp. 174–6, 375–8; Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, pp. 51–3, 71–85; Long, *Hellenistic*, pp. 152–8, 170–5.

***bodies … foods and sustenance*:** Mahé, *Hermes* II, 218, takes this passage as evidence against Festugière's claim (1936), pp. 141–50, that "the Egyptian" mentioned in Porphyry's *On Abstinence* 2.47 is Hermes Trismegistus, but Festugière's analysis focuses on sections 27-9, below; see also *C.H.* I.18–19; NF II, 377, n. 185.

***other vices of… souls*:** For *reliqua mentis vitia animis humanis insidere*, NF II, 324, has "tous les autres vices de l'âme trouvent place dans le cœur humain."

***nature's cleanest part*:** The Latin is *mundissima parte naturae*; above, section 2.

***law … law*:** NF II, 324, preserves both instances of *lege* in this sentence, noting that Thomas excised one of them.

***capable … better than the gods*:** Mahé, *Hermes* I, 153, finds *posset* ("capable") more tentative than the wording in *NHC* VI.8.67.32–5; below, section 23, notes on "forms" and "gods eternal"; above, sections 6, 9; *C.H.* X.24; *A.D.* 8.6–7; *S.H.* XI.2–3; NF II, 378, n. 189; Scott III, 151; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 221.

***faithful affection*:** The Latin *pio affectu* describes a divine attribute here; NF II, 372, 378, n. 91, noting that the phrase is difficult to render, opts for "un tendre amour"; above, section 1.

23 ***And since … near to humans*:** Augustine cites this and the concluding sentence of this section in *City of God* 8.23, in a discussion of magic and demonology. The topic of god-making comes up again in sections 37-8, below. See also, section 24; Scott IV, 180; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 223.

***temple gods* … *content* :** NF II, 325, has "dieux … qui se satisfont," but Parrott, *NHC* VI, p. 412, has "gods who are held" for *qui ... contenti*.

***glorified … strong*:** Nock follows Thomas in emending *inluminantur* and *inluminant* to the singular forms and in adopting *conformat* for *confirmat* ("makes … strong") from a scribal correction. Festugière and Scott note that *inluminare* connotes "enliven," and Festugière points to the notion of kinship among the members of a chain (*seira*) or series (*taxis*) as the basis of god-making: above, sections, 6, 7, 11, 19; below, section 32; *C.H.* I.9; NF II, 325, 378, nn. 193–4; Festugière, *HMP*, pp. 121–2, n. 3; Dodds, *Elements*, pp. 222–3, 256–60, 267–76; *Irrational*, pp. 285–95. But on the basis of the Coptic, Mahé, *Hermès* II, 224, thinks that *inluminari* represents *apotheousthai* ("deify") rather than *phōtizesthai* ("illuminate"), and on the same grounds he prefers *confirmat* to *conformat*, suggesting the following translation: "Non seulement il entre en gloire, mais il donne la gloire; non seulement il progresse vers Dieu, mais il donne force aux dieux." However, note *conformat* and *conformatae sunt* in this section, below. See also: above, section 18, below, 29, 32, 41; *C.H.* V.2; X.6; XIII.9, 18; XVI. 16; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 167, 215; Bousset, *Kyrios*, p. 166.

***deserves admiration*:** As in section 6, above; NF II, 378, n. 195; Scott III, 156.

***admit … like heads*:** For "cleanest" (*mundissima*) see above, sections 2, 22. Following Rohde, NF II, 325, emends *confusione* to *confessione*, which corresponds here to "admit" and is confirmed by the Coptic. The "signs" (*signa*) are "like heads" (*quasi capita*) because they are individual heavenly bodies, limbless and bodiless spheres, according to Scott, III, 156, citing *Timaeus* 40A, 44D; cf. NF II, 378, n. 196; *C.H.* X.l 1 ; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 225; Mahé (1974a), p. 150.

***humans form … falls short*:** Mahé, *Hermès* II, 226, interprets the Coptic (*NHC* VI.8.69.15–17) as mentioning only the divine nature, not the material; above, section 22, note on "capable." From a scribal correction, Nock (NF II, 325) emends *conformata est* to *conformatae sunt*, suggesting that the translator might have been thinking of the Greek neuter plural subject (*species* = *eidē*) with singular verb; above, section 1; Mahé (1974a), p. 148, for confirmation in the Coptic of Nock's reading. The manuscript reading *intra*, preserved by Nock, might be construed (*OLD* s.v. *intra*, 4–5) to give the sense "falls short," but in any event see Scott III, 156, and Mahé, *Hermès* II, 227, for *infra*; Festugière has "en deçà de."

***gods eternal … him*:** In the Coptic text (*NHC* VI.8.69.22–5) it is the "inner man" who resembles God, but on the sensitive attribute of eternity the Latin confines divine resemblance to the created divinities; above, notes on "humans" in this section and "capable" in section 22; *C.H.* V.6; XVI.Title; Mahé, *Hermès* II, *111*.

24 ***statues … ensouled*:** Mahé, *Hermès* II, 228, corrects the interrogative *videsne* to *vides* ("see") from the Coptic. Scott III, 151–6, argues that by the time the *Asclepius* was written, educated Greeks had long since ceased to think that cult-statues could come alive, and to this attitude he contrasts the Egyptian belief that spirits of the gods moved in and out of cult-statues, on which see Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 37–8. Unlike the familiar monumental representations of the Egyptian gods, true Greek cult-statues (*xoana*) were not seen in public. And in some cases, the gods of Egypt inhabited sacred animals as well as cult-images. Mahé, *Hermès* II, 228–9, and Derchain (1962), pp. 187–8, refer to the influence of Egyptian cultic practice on such late Greek authors as Iamblichus. Braun, *Jean*, pp. 283–6, compares this section of the *Asclepius* to Porphyry's defense of idols in *On Statues*, and he contrasts Ps. 115:4–8 and other OT and NT passages. Van den Broek (1978), pp. 118–42, discusses other Christian reversals of the Egyptian attitudes toward statues expressed here and in the following sections. Cf. sections 19, 22, above; 37-8, below; *C.H.* XVII; *A.D.* 8.3; NF II, 379, n. 198; J. Kroll, *Lehren*, pp. 90–5; Burkert, *Religion*, pp. 90–2, 166–7, 187.

***make people ill*:** Perhaps "make men impotent" would render *inbecillitates hominibus facientes* fairly – given the strong interest in sexuality above (sections 20-1), the frequent use of magic to impede sexual potency and the symmetry between sickness/cure and pain/pleasure in the sentence – but NF II, 326, 379, n. 200, has "envoient aux hommes les maladies."

***Do you not … remain ignorant*:** The apocalypse or prediction (Mahé, *Hermès* II, 68, expressly prefers *prediction*) begins here and continues through the words *monte Libyco* in section 27 (*NHC* VI.8.76.1). Scott III, 159–69, dates it precisely to 268–73 CE (below, note on "Indian") and connects it with the tension between Christianity and the old religion – as Augustine did in the *City of God* 8.23–6. Scott also maintains that because the complaints about penal laws against the old religion (below, section

25) could not have been formulated before the reign of Constantius, specifically his edict of 353, such criticisms must have been added later, and Nock (NF II, 288) places the additions between the times of Lactantius and Augustine. Another possible occasion for interpolation was 384–91, when repressive measures were taken in Egypt itself, but Mahé and others (*Hermès* II, 58, 70–80, 232; Krause [1969], pp. 56–7; Dunand [1977], pp. 46–58, 64) show that reference to irreverent laws can be accounted for from native traditions, dating from before the first interdynastic period to the second century BCE, when, most probably, the *Potter's Oracle* (below) was composed among priests who honored the gods Thoth (Hermes) and Khnum (Agathodaimon). In any event, since the Coptic text also mentions the laws, late interpolation is improbable (Schwartz [1982], pp. 165–9).

Scott himself cites examples of Egyptian apocalypse going back to the Middle Kingdom, along with Jewish and Christian apocalyptic such as the *Sibylline Oracles*, but he does not mention the *Potter's Oracle*, which Reitzenstein (*Studien*, pp. 38–57) first connected with the *Asclepius* and traced to Iranian sources, via an Egyptian author of the second century BCE who was familiar with the Old Testament. The significance of the *Potter's Oracle* for this part of the *Asclepius* is also noted in NF II, pp. 380–2, nn. 208–11, 214, 218, 219, 222, 224. J.Z. Smith (*Map*, pp. 74–87), describing Egyptian apocalyptic literature from *c*. 2000 BCE. to its late echoes c. 300 CE, concludes that "pure apocalypse is … best represented by … *Asclepius* 24–26, whose kinship with the 'Potter's Oracle' … has long been recognized." Smith constructs a four-part schema for this literature: (1) the prophet tells the king of (2) social, religious and natural disorders culminating in invasion by foreigners and desertion by the gods of a dead land (3) to which, however, the gods will send a king to expel the alien and restore order, (4) a message for which the prophet wins praise as a wise person. In Smith's view, the *Potter's Oracle* qualifies as genuine apocalyptic because it is post-pharaonic (*c*. 130 BCE), even though it ascribes its core incident to the XVIIIth dynasty: having made his pots on an island sacred to Re, a potter saw his work smashed as sacrilegious, despite his having been ordered to the island by Thoth; the potter – a type of Khnum, the ram-headed creator god – predicts similar destruction for Egypt and the evil followers of Set, but in its historical context the propaganda is anti-Greek. For a theme-by-theme comparison of

the *Asclepius* and the *Potter's Oracle*, see Dunand (1977), pp. 46–59, who also provides parallels with other Egyptian apocalyptic texts.

Although Reitzenstein (*Studien*, pp. 48–51) argues that the source of the *Potter's Oracle* was Iranian, Nock (1929b), p. 199, disagrees, adding in NF II, 289, that "all sorts of prophecies circulated under the Empire.… I am inclined to think that a Jewish document, passed from hand to hand or by oral tradition, is the basis of our text." Mahé, *Hermes* II, 233, believes that no specific connection with any particular text is called for, the broader influence of Egyptian predictions being sufficient. See also: Fraser, *Alexandria*, I, 509, 680–4; Derchain (1962), pp. 187–96; Mahé (1975b), pp. 29–32; Bowman, *Egypt*, pp. 44, 192.

***image of heaven … temple*:** According to Scott (III, 166–8; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 94–5), the structure of temple ritual was supposed to correspond to the workings of the heavens, and terrestrial effects of celestial causes were thought to depend on the success of the rites, so in this sense heaven indeed came down to earth, and Egypt was the temple of the world because the gods lived there. Mahé, *Hermès* II, 230, also refers to *S.H.* XXIII.32, XXIV. 11, XXV.6 for praises of Egypt; see also: Kákosy (1967), pp. 246–7; Derchain (1962), pp. 190–1.

***a time … when* :** For *cum* ("when") Mahé, *Hermès* II, 230, substitutes *quo* ("in which") on the basis of the Coptic.

***paid respect … abandoned*:** The words "paid respect" translate *servasse* in the sense of *observasse*; Festugière (NF II, 327) has "ont … honoré," but Nock (380, n. 203) suggests that "ont … préservé" might be appropriate, i.e., preserving the rituals and hence the effective presence of the gods; see Krause (1969), pp. 52–3, and Mahé, *Hermès* II, 234, for Egyptian parallels on the departure of gods and humans; see also Mahé (1974a), pp. 148–9, for the Coptic version of "all their holy worship." Augustine cites section 24 from its beginning to the end of this sentence in the *City of God* 8.23; above, section 23; Scott IV, 180.

***foreigners occupy*:** Derchain (1962), pp. 195–7, detects similarities to Papyrus Jumilhac from late Ptolemaic Egypt; "occupy" translates *conplentibus*, the reading in NF II, 327, but Mahé, *Hermès* II, 231, prefers *conpetentibus* as closer to the Coptic, giving it an extended sense of "attain" or "invade."

***tombs and corpses*:** Here and in the next paragraph, Scott (III, 169; NF II, 380, n. 207; below, note on "the entombed") argues that "tombs"

(*sepulcra*) cannot be right because Egypt had always been full of tombs, concluding that the apocalyptic novelty must have been the need for many "funerals" (*taphai* = *sepulcra*) at the same time. Augustine cites this sentence twice; *City of God* 8.26; Reitzenstein, *Studien*, p. 44, refers to an Iranian source,

Only words … ***Indian*****:** For Reitzenstein (*Studien*, p. 44) the Asian invaders are evidence of Iranian influence, but Ferguson (Scott IVF, x-xi, 416–17; NF II, 288–9; Festugière [1944], p. 258; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 233) reads "Scythian or Indian" as a commonplace for nameless barbarians; if the expression is a mere *topos*, common not only in apocalyptic literature such as the *Sibylline Oracles* but also in broader literary contexts, Scott's lengthy argument (above, note on "Do … ignorant") for dating the apocalypse to the period of the Palmyrene invasion of Egypt (268–73) also evaporates. Schwartz (1982), p. 168, links the first part of this sentence with Tacitus, *Annals* 2.60, describing a voyage of Germanicus to Egypt.

divinity goes back**:** Above, note on "abandoned."

river … banks**:** For "the river" as Egyptian usage for the Nile, see Krause (1969), p. 53; also Mahé, *Hermès* II, 57–8, 234–5, who comments on *ripas* ("banks") as an inexact rendering of the term "dikes" (as suggested by the Coptic) and infers that the translator knew little about Egypt. In the *Potter's Oracle* the Nile runs dry, not bloody, but cf. Exod. 7:17; Rev. 8:18, 16:3; and other texts cited in NF II, 380–1, n. 211.

the entombed**:** In place of *sepulcrorum* ("tombs"; see above, note on "tombs and corpses") in NF II, 328, Mahé, *Hermès* II, 235, reads *sepultorum* ("the entombed"), which is also Augustine's wording in *City of God* 8.26; cf. Scott III, 169. On the Egyptian background for the number of the dead, see also Krause (1969), p. 53.

25 ***utter ⟨un⟩belief*****:** Mahé, *Hermès* I, 19–20, II, 236, following Puech, reads ⟨*in*⟩*credulitatis* for *crudelitatis* or *credulitatis* in the manuscripts; NF II, 328, has "la cruauté la plus atroce," opting for *crudelitatis* ("cruelty"); see NF II, 311, n. 214; also Krause (1969), p. 54, for Egyptian background to the reversal of values lamented in this section and the next.

weariness … a single thing**:** Scott III, 170–2, interprets this as Egyptian fear that triumphant Christianity will extinguish reverence for the world as a basis of religious sentiment, but he recognizes that the *Hermetica* are

quite inconsistent on the status of the material universe: below, sections 26-7; above, sections 6-7, 10-11; *C.H.* VI.4, IX.4, X. 10–12; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 236–7; see also *C.H.* IX.6 for the cosmos as a mechanism or instrument (*machina*, *organon*) of God's will.

***prefer shadows … person*:** Scott III, 171–2, reads this and related material as Egyptian revulsion for Christian ascetics, seen as haters of life, lovers of darkness, madly anxious to be tortured and martyred; below, section 29. They do not cherish "the honored duty of looking up to heaven" (above, sections 6, 9) because they do not love the splendor of the world. On light/life as opposed to shadows/death, see above, section 19; *C.H.* I.9; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, p. 170.

***teachings about soul*:** The Christian doctrine of resurrection might seem offensive from the point of view of, e.g., *C.H.* X. 15–22: Scott III, 173; NF II, 381, n. 215.

reverence of mind: Of this phrase – *mentis religioni*, rendered "la religion de l'esprit" in NF II, 329, 381, n. 216 – Festugière says that it is "a fortunate locution that could serve to describe all of Hermetic piety," but Ferguson (Scott IVF, xii) doubts that it represents "the 'religion of Mind' whose adherents are to be persecuted," and recommends a translation along the lines of *tēs psuchēs eusebeia*, "reverence of soul"; cf. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 24; Scott I, 343, III, 174; FR II, 91, IV, 259.

***capital penalty … new justice*:** Above, note on "remain ignorant," section 24.

***withdraw … remain … driving*:** On the basis of the Coptic, Mahé emends these three present tense verbs in Nock's text (*fit, remanent*, *conpellunt*) to futures (*fiet*, *remanebunt*, *conpellent*). While commenting on *C.H.* XVI.10–16, Lactantius attributes to "Asclepius, disciple of Hermes" the Greek words (*angelousponerous*) corresponding to "baleful angels" (*nocentes angeli*). Although various forms of *daimōn* occur forty-eight times in the *Hermetica*, Scott notes that *angelus* and *angelos* are rare here but common in pagan sources after Porphyry under the influence of Jewish or Persian traditions. Cumont, *Lux*, notes the synonymy of "angel" and "demon" and their equivalent moral status, here and in section 37. Ferguson emphasizes Persian demonology, but Philonenko (1975), pp. 161–3, looks to Jewish apocalyptic, *I Enoch*. See: above, section 24, note on "abandoned"; below, section 37; *S.H.* XXIV. 5; *I Enoch* 8.1, 10.11,

19.1, 69.6; Lactantius, *Institutes* 2.15.7–8; NF II, 329–30, 381, n. 217; Scott III, 175–6, IV, 15,417–19; Festugière (1936), pp. 148–9; Krause (1969), p. 55; Mahé, *Hermes* II, 88–9, 239.

***earth stand … gloomy lethargy*:** See Derchain (1962), pp. 193–4, for parallels to an Egyptian source, Papyrus Salt 825. In the *City of God* Augustine refuted pagan claims that Christian abandonment of the old rites upset the order of nature, but other Christians blamed impious pagans for deranging the world: Scott III, 176–7.

26 ***disregard:*** For *inrationabilitas* ("disregard") Festugière has "con fusion," but he agrees with Nock that the Latin may represent *alogia*, giving "dédain, mépris," which is confirmed according to Mahé by the Coptic: *Hermès* II, 240; NF II, 278, 329, 382, n. 220; Scott IVF, 419; above, section 25, note on "unbelief."

W*hen all … beauty of old*: Lactantius cites a Greek version of this passage in *Divine Institutes* 7.18.3–4; Scott IV, 26–7; NF II, 330. The Hermetist opens a discussion of a new "geniture" (⟨*re*⟩*genitura, palingenesia*) or "restoration" (*revocatio*, *restitutio*, *reformatio*, *apokatastasis*) of the world. Scott II, 177–81, locates the chief influence on this passage in the Stoic notion of *ekpurōsisfollowed* by *apokatastasis*, also citing *Timaeus* 22B-3B, *Statesman* 268D-74D and other texts; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 102–11, admits Platonic influence of a general kind but considers it secondary to Egyptian traditions. See also: *C.H.* I.17; XI. 6; NF II, 288–9, 382, n. 222. On correspondences between the Latin and the Greek in Lactantius: Scott III, 182–4; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 241; and Wigtil (1984), 2290–1, who argues that the shift from Greek aorists to Latin present and future tenses (e.g., *apokatestēsen-*⟩ *revocabit*, "will restore") represents an effort on the part of the Latin translator to accommodate the language of the text to prophecy of future disaster, as apart from a tale of past calamity; he notes other such tense changes between Greek and Latin in section 41, below.

***the god … first god*:** This phrase is problematic, both in Latin and in the Greek given by Lactantius. Although Festugière translates *deus primipotens et unius gubernator dei* as "le Dieu premier en puissance et démiurge du dieu un," he asks whether *unius/henos* means "un" or "premier" since the Greek corresponding to *gubernator* is *dēmiourgos* (above, *C.H.* I.9), and a *dēmiourgos* could be "first" only in some relative

sense (e.g., *C.H.* V.2). The Greek in Lactantius (*ho kurios kai patēr kai theos kai tou prōtou kai henos theou dēmiourgos*) means: "The lord and father and god and demiurge of the first and one god." Scott III, 182–3, solves the problem by replacing the underlined portion of the Greek with *tou kosmou* ("of the cosmos") or its equivalent and adding to it an appropriate adjective, such as *tou prdtogenous* ("firstborn"). Mahé, *Hermès* II, 107, 241–2, interprets "premier Dieu unique" in the Coptic as referring to the cosmos, god's first creation and thus primary after him alone; the Coptic also has "demiurge" where the Latin has *gubernator*. Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 370–3, interprets the Greek *tou prōtou* to mean "that the second principle is also 'first' [and] … that the Hermeticist is postulating a consubstantial relation between the first and second principles … [wherein] the second god is clearly a transcendent spiritual principle… . However, the wider context … suggests that the second god is the sensible cosmos … [and] 'first' in the sense of being the first product of the first principle."

***flood … restore*:** NF II, 288–9, 382, n. 224; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 242–5; Mahé (1974a), p. 149; above, note on "beauty of old" in this section. Cumont (1931), pp. 29–31, 64–93, noting that Lactantius made use not only of Hermetic prophecy but also of "Hystaspes, a very ancient king of the Medes" (*Divine Institutes* 7.15.19), argues for Iranian parallels to some of the apocalyptic themes in this section.

***geniture … without beginning*:** NF II, 331, accepts Reitzenstein's insertion of *sed voluntate* ("but … will"), noting in the apparatus that for *genitura* earlier editors had proposed *regenitura* or similar expressions as closer to *palingenesia*, but this is not supported by the Coptic, according to Mahé, *Hermès* II, 244, who also rejects *sed voluntate*, suggesting that the antecedent of *quae* ("which") is *restitutio*, obscured by faulty translation of the Greek; also, Mahé (1974a), pp. 149, 152. In any case, the context calls for the astrological associations of *genitura* and "geniture"; *OLD* s.v. *genitura* 3; *OED* s.v. "geniture" 2; above, note on "beauty of old" in this section.

***God's nature … from will*:** According to Scott (III, 192; cf. NF II, 383, n. 276) the three words represented here by "will," "deliberation" and "act of willing" – *voluntas*, *consilium* and *velie* – may correspond to a distinction like that outlined by Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 1111b3–15a2, among *boulēsis*, *bouleusis* and *pro- airesis* ("wish," "choice" and

"deliberation" in the Ross-Urmson translation); cf. above, sections 8, 19-20; *C.H.* I.8, X.2; Lewy, *Oracles*, p. 331 ; Peters, *Terms*, p. 163. In light of the Coptic (*NHC* VI.8.74.15- 20), Mahé (*Hermès* II, 187–8, 245–6) gives a Latin text, adopted here, that departs considerably from NF II, 331, both in wording and in punctuation:

> *"Dei enim natura consilium est*, *voluntas bonitas summa*
> *"Consilium* ⟨*est voluntas*,⟩ *o Trismegiste?"*
> "O *Asclepi*, *voluntas consilio nascitur et ipsum velle e voluntate*."

***⟨good⟩ from good*:** NF II, 331, following W. Kroll, inserts *bonus* after *boni*, which, according to Mahé, *Hermès* II, 247, is confirmed by the Coptic.

27 ***forms and kinds*:** For this rendering of *speciebus vel generibus*, see above, section 2, on "forms."

***succession of seasons*:** NF II, 332, reads *alternationis partuum temporalium* ("la succession des naissances en leur temps"), but Mahé, *Hermès* II, 248, emends *partuum* ("births") to *partium*, which combined with *temporalium* gives "seasons."

***seated atop … is everywhere*:** FR II, 69, senses equivocation between a transcendent and an immanent god in this sentence. See *PGM* IV. 1010–15 (Betz, p. 58): "You who are seated on top of the world and judge the universe."

***dispenses ⟨life⟩ … Plutonius*:** Nock's text reads simply *dispensator*, but, following Ferguson, Festugière translates *dispensator* ⟨*vitae*⟩ (*chorēgōn zōēn*), which the Coptic confirms; Mahé (1974a), p. 150. Festugière also identifies the two Jupiters mentioned here as "cosmic gods" unrelated to the hypercosmic Jupiter of section 19, above. However, although Mahé agrees that the god "atop the summit of the highest heaven" is "the supreme and most high god" (*deus summus exsuperantissimus*) of section 41 (cf. *C.H.* I.31, IV.5, XI.19; *NHC* VI.7.63.36), he also argues that the three lower gods in the Coptic text (Demiurge, Zeus Ploutonios, Korē) are reduced to two Jupiters in the Latin because of the syncretism of Jupiter, Saturn and Baal- Hammon in North Africa, which thus gains credence as a possible locale for the Latin translation; above, note on Title. See: NF II,

332, 384, nn. 228–30; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 248–51; cf. Scott III, 107–15, IVF, xiii.

***distributed … their story*:** The word *distribuentur* ("distributed") is repeated in the manuscripts, but Nock obelizes the second occurrence, and Ferguson proposes emending it to *restituentur*, but Mahé suggests *discedent* ("withdraw"). Scott identifies the sunset city as Alexandria, Zielinski chooses Cyrene, but Festugière thinks that the writer's apocalyptic hope requires no particular location. Scott believes that the city in question was Arsinoe or Crocodilopolis and that "Libyan mountain" refers to the elevated land west of the Nile. Van Rinsveld (1985), pp. 238–42, points out that the parallel passage in *NHC* VI.8.75.25–35, puts the whole sequence of events in the *future* so that "the lords of the earth *will* withdraw … and … *will* establish themselves in a city … toward the setting of the sun. Every man *will* go in to it … [and they] *will* … be settled … in the great city … on the [Libyan] mountain." Thus, in the Coptic there is only *one* city in question, and it is the goal of this whole series of *future* events, but in the Latin there are *two* cities and *two* sets of events, one *future* and one *present*. The gods *will go* to the sunset city, though *now* they *are* in the "city on the Libyan mountain." The Greek word *Libuē* could mean either Egypt west of the Nile or the territory of Alexandria. Although, like Festugière, Van Rinsveld admits that Libya need not be any particular place to suit the apocalyptic message, he suggests that in the original *Logos Teleios*, if its setting were Ptolemaic, Alexandria might have been a suitable place for the return of the gods (in contrast to the *Potter's Oracle*, which glorifies Memphis) but that in the Christian times of the Latin *Asclepius* Alexandria would not have been thinkable. See: NF II, 332, 384, n. 231; Scott III, 223–5, 236–8, 242–3, IVF, xiv, n. 2, 420; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 5, II, 251–2; (1974a), p. 152; Zielinski (1905), pp. 370–1, (1906), pp. 40–1, 50–2; above, section 10; below, section 37.

We *must … consciousness*: Stobaeus (NF II, 333) preserves a Greek version of this passage, which Scott (III, 257–9) compares with the Latin. The translator's efforts to mimic the Greek are apparent, even to the extent of imitating the genitive absolute, *tou arithmou plērōthentos*, with an anomolous Latin construction, *numeri completi* ("after the time has passed"; literally, "when the number ⟨of years⟩ has been filled up"); above, section 1. Ferguson (Scott IVF, 431) cites Macrobius, *Commentary*

on Scipio's Dream 1.13.11–13, for the idea that the body leaves the soul – not the reverse – when its number is up. For Epicurean and other influences, see: Mahé, *Hermès* II, 253; Carcopino, *Rome*, p. 268.

***fear … true account*:** *NHC* VI.8.76.4–6; *A.D.* 10.6; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 401.

***Death* … *disintegration*:** For *dissolutio* and *dialusis*, see Mahé, *Hermès* II, 253–4, citing *C.H.* I.24–5, XI.14, XII.16; Plato, *Gorgias* 524B; *Phaedo* 82D-3B, 88B; *Republic* 609A; and for possible Egyptian background, Iversen, *Doctrine*, pp. 40–1.

28 ***When soul … streams of matter*:** The "streams of matter" are *mundanis fluctibus;* above, section 2. See Lydus, *On Months* 4.32, 149 (Scott IV, 230–2; NF II, 334; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 256–7; above, Title) for references to the *Logos teleios* corresponding to this passage; FR III, 121, compares Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.735–51, noting that the Greek given by Lydus confirms the connection with descriptions of Pyriphlegethon and Tartarus in Plato (see below on "chief demon") and the poets; see also: Cumont, *Lux*, pp. 208–14; Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, pp. 301–3.

***chief demon*:** Lydus (4.32; Scott IV, 230) associates this passage with Plato's *Phaedo*, and Scott (III, 259–60) cites *Phaedo* 107D, 112A-114B, *Gorgias* 524A-D, and *Republic* 614C as Platonic precedents. Festugière (NF II, 385–6, n. 238) argues that the judging demon mentioned here is different from the "baleful angels" of section 25 or the "avenging demon" of C.H. 1.23, even though Lydus has *tous men timōrous tōn daimonōn*, and he suggests that the *summus daemon* may be Mithras, who judges mortals in similar circumstances; Ferguson (Scott IVF, 432) suspects Iranian influence; cf. Lactantius, *Institutes* 2.14.6; FR III, 151; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 257–9.

***places suitable to it*:** Whether the "places" are meant to be suited to the judge or the judged is ambiguous in the Latin, but Mahé, *Hermès* II, 260, opts for the latter on the basis of *Phaedo* 108C and Lydus, who assigns the blessed soul not to the chief demon but to savior-demons (*sōtērikoi daimones*); cf. *S.H.* XXVI. 1–2.

***consigns … between heaven*:** My translation, like Festugière's, requires Nock's emendation, following Thomas, of *traditur inter* and similar manuscript readings to *tradit ut inter*; cf. section 12, above; NF II, 334–5.

***penalties after death*:** Above, C.H. X.20.

29 ***condemned … with a soul*:** Scott III, 266, changes *qui*, the first word of this sentence, to *quia*, thereby making the executed criminal better off after death because his debt is already paid, but NF II, 335, preserves the *qui*, and Festugière's translation reaches the much different conclusion represented here as well; see also FR III, 122; (1936), 144–8. The Coptic answers the question of Asclepius differently, awarding temple-thieves (*hierosuloi*) rather than those who die violently (*biaiothanatoi*) the greatest penalty, and Mahé (*Hermès* II, 267–8) believes that the Coptic reflects the Greek original, while recognizing that the Latin may reflect a dislike of the Christian cult of martyrs; above, section 25.

***On the … all evils*:** Lactantius (*Institutes* 2.15.6; NF II, 335–6; Scott IV, 14–15; above, Title) cites a Greek passage corresponding to this sentence, as does Cyril of Alexandria in *Against Julian* (701 A; Scott IV, 191, n. 2, 219–20). Before *contra* ("on the other hand") Festugière detects a possible lacuna, which Scott locates after *homini* ("person"); on the basis of the Greek in Lactantius and Cyril, Festugière concludes that the original may have specified "the upright person's defense" as being "contre la fatalité et les démons" (Lactantius: *oute daimōn oute heimarmenē kratei*): NF II, 386, n. 242; Scott III, 266–7, 276–8.

***illuminating … through mind*:** Above, section 23; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 172–3.

***shadows … whole consciousness*:** Philonenko (1967), p. 408, suggests analogies with Philo and pseudo-Philonic texts: *On the Migration of Abraham* 76; *Biblical Antiquities* 37.3. For *toto se sensu intellegentiae* NF II, 336, 387, n. 246, has "de tout son intellect à l'intelligence divine," while offering "à la connaissance de Dieu" as an alternative.

***eyes … is enlightened*:** Following early editors, Nock reads *oculis* ("eyes") for *occuli* ; Festugière refers to "the mind's eye" elsewhere in the *Hermetica* (X.4; cf. IV. 11, VII.2) and translates *clarescit* as "est illuminé," which Nock confirms by reference to *Asclep*. 18 and 36, while allowing that "is famous for" (*doxazetai*) is also possible, as well as *phōtizetai*; see also *Asclep*. 23, 32, 41, for *cognitionis ... lumen (gnōseōs phōtismos*) or knowledge as illumination: NF II, 336, 386, n. 248; Scott III, 278; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, p. 174; *Chaldaean Oracles* 1 (Des Places, p. 66); Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 165–70, 370–5.

confidence of his belief : NF II, 336, 386, n. 249, has "fermement assuré dans sa foi" for *fiducia credulitatis suae*, referring to *pistis* in *C.H.* IX. 10; Scott III, 278, cites Heb. 11:1.

***sun illuminates … in the world*:** Scott III, 194, thinks that *sol* ("sun") must be a mistake for *mundus* ("world"), but Festugière (NF II, 386–7, n. 250; FR IV, 169) cites *C.H.* XVI.5, 18, on the sun as a second god, as against VIII. 1, IX.8, X.14 and section 8, above; see also XVI. 16 on the sun illuminating reason. "All that are in the world" represents *omniaque mundana*; above, section 2.

***For if… life and eternity*:** Both Scott and Festugière explain *viventis etenim semper uniuscuiusque partis* ("Since each part of it … lives forever") as Latinization of a Greek genitive absolute, and Festugière sees the repetition in this paragraph as deliberately emphatic; above, section 1.

***and he dispenses … at once*:** By punctuating after *dispensavit* ("dispensed"), NF II, 337, solves parsimoniously a textual problem that moved other editors to heroic measures.

30 ***Eternity's lifegiving*:** NF II, 387–8, nn. 258–67, refers most frequently to C.H. XI.2–4 for parallels to the treatment of *aeternitas (aiōn*) in the *Asclepius*, but see also 11.12, V.10, VIII.3, IX.6–8, XII. 16–17, XIII.11 and XVI.8–9; Lewy, *Oracles*, pp. 403–4. Scott III, 185–91, recognizes the wide range of meanings that *aeternitas* might cover in Hermetic usage, but he concludes that the doctrine of eternity in the *Asclepius* can be accounted for in terms of Plato's distinction in *Timaeus* 37D-8B between *aiōn* and *chronos*. Festugière's analysis in FR IV, 166–75, is more complex. In sections 4, 10, 12 and 28 above, he takes *aeternitas* to mean either eternity or immortality or permanence in the abstract, but in sections 29-32 he finds another set of meanings, leading from eternal life to the world-soul as source of life to the power (*aiōn, dunamis*) of life in god and ultimately to *Aiōn* personified as God or the mind of God. He puts the transition from *aeternitas* as eternal life to *aeternitas* as world-soul at the beginning of this section.

***never stop moving*:** NF II, 337, reads *nec stabit aliquando* where all but one of the manuscripts have *nec stabili quando*.

***governed under the sun*:** For *sub sole gubernantur* NF II, 338, 388, n. 259, has "soumis au gouvernement divin sous le soleil," but the note recognizes the ambiguity preserved in my translation by distinguishing

"soumis à un ordre sous le soleil" from "soumis au gouvernement du soleil"; cf. Scott III, 201; FR IV, 169–70.

***dispersing*:** For *differens* Festugière has "diversifiant," but Nock suggests "dispersant" on the basis of Apuleius, *On the Cosmos* 23; NF II, 338, 388, n. 261.

***whole … scheme*:** NF II, 338, accepts Thomas's emendation of *omnia* in the manuscripts to *omni* ("whole").

***alternation*:** NF II, 338, has "le retour alterné des saisons" for *alternationem;* below, section 31.

***unless … itself immobile*:** FR IV, 170, remarks on the difficulty of this passage and interprets it in light of *C.H.* XI.3 and Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 284a2–10: "Could one not argue that God has a movement that consists in *aiōn*, i.e., in an activity of eternal life…? No – better to say that *aiōn*, the activity of God's eternal life, is itself immobile, though other movements derive from it and return to it!" See also *C.H.* II.12.

31 ***Therefore … stable*:** Nock follows Thomas in adding the first *semper* ("always") in this sentence. For other Hermetic texts bearing on the doctrine of eternity presented here, see above, section 30; *C.H.* II. 6; IV.8; V.2; VIII.2; XI.2, 15, 20–1; XII.15; NF II, 339, 388–9, 268- 76; FR IV, 170–3.

***This sensible world*:** FR IV, 171, n. 1, rejects the view of J. Kroll (*Lehren*, p. 67, n. 2) and others that *mundus sensibilis* is equivalent here to *kosmos noētos;* however, he agrees that it cannot refer to "the concrete sensible world" and concludes that it represents "the plan of the cosmos, the world as thought in the divine Aion-Mind."

***image of that god*:** FR IV, 170–1, identifies *huius dei* ("that god") as the hypostasized Aion, which is also the identity of the *aeternitas* who stands by God in the previous sentence.

***necessity of recurring*:** Above, section 13; FR IV, 171–2.

***stirs within himself*:** FR IV, 172, n. 1, has "se meut lui-même vers lui-même" but allows the possibility of "en lui-même"; NF II, 339, has "se meut lui-même en soi."

***immensity … of immensity*:** The argument that "immensity" (*magnitudo*) or infinity excludes mobility is a distant echo of Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 275b 12–29, according to FR IV, 172–3.

***beyond limitation … fetched*:** For *incomprehensibile, inaestimabile est*; *nec sustineri etenim nec ferri*, NF II, 339, 389, n. 272, has "nul ne peut l'embrasser ni le mesurer; il ne peut être ni soutenu ni porté," but he notes that *incomprehensibile* may mean "incompréhensible."

***alternation … recurrence*:** For *alternatione* Festugière has "le changement des saisons"; he also translates Nock's suggestion of *alternis* ("périodiquement") for *alterius*, the reading in the text, and takes *per ambitudinem reditu* ("return through recurrence") as representing *di' apokatastasin;* Scott IVF, 423; NF II, 340, 389, n. 275, 398, n. 338; above, sections 13, 30, below, section 40.

***fixed to sustain*:** For *sustinere* ("sustain") NF II, 340, 389, n. 276, gives "servir de base," referring to the idea of *antereisis* ("balance") in *C.H.* II.6.

32 ***beginnings … and eternity*:** NF II, 389, n. 277, refers to "the original things, the primeval things, the sources or beginnings of all" in section 17, above, and to similar language in section 19, noting also that Ferguson (Scott IVF, xxix-xxx) connects the "second" God of section 19 with eternity (*aiōn*) in 31. In FR IV, 174, Festugière interprets *aeternitas* in this paragraph as the hypostasized Aion, Mind of God; see also Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 358–61.

***total consciousness*:** As in general, "consciousness" in this paragraph represents *sensus*, but it should be understood that the Greek term behind the Latin may be *nous*. In fact, Festugière suggests *ho pas nous* for *omnis … sensus*, where *omnis* has the sense of *totus*. He also warns that the meanings of key terms here (*sensus, intellegentia, intellectus*) are equivocal, so that "the translation remains quite uncertain" and "it is impossible to discover the author's true intent." Scott also concludes that "this paragraph is meaningless in the Latin." Nonetheless, he maintains that the passage as a whole, beginning with the words *omnis ergo* ("total"), distinguishes three levels of *nous*: divine, cosmic and human. Ferguson adds a fourth, *aiōn*, producing the hierarchy of Supreme God, Eternity, Cosmos and Mankind, which Festugière accepts; cf Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 348–50. The corres ponding terms in my translation are: divine (or total) consciousness; eternity's understanding or consciousness; the world's consciousness; and human consciousness. Both "consciousness" and "understanding" (*sensus, intellectus*) are ambiguous in that either can

be understood subjectively (M's subjective consciousness of object *N*) or objectively (the understanding that belongs objectively to *M* as subject). See: above, section 3; *C.H.* I.1; NF II, 340, 389–91, nn. 278–9, 283, 285, 290; FR IV, 174; Scott III, 215, IVF, xxvi-vii, 423–6.

whole ordering: Festugière (NF II, 389–90, nn. 279–80; Scott IVF, xxvi, 423) believes that *disciplina* ("ordering" here and in the next sentence) represents *taxis*, on which see above, section 23; Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 140–5; Dodds, *Elements*, pp. xxi, 129, 208–9, 257–60, 267, 273; and for other instances of *disciplina*, sections 16 and 39.

***But … memory's tenacity*:** Following Goldbacher, Nock shows a lacuna after *humanus vero* ("But… human"), and Festugière's translation takes up suggestions of Brakman (*pendet*) and Scott (*sensus*) for filling the gap; NF II, 340–1, 390, n. 281; Scott III, 213.

supreme god did: Following Thomas, NF II, 341, emends *summum* to *summus* ("supreme").

***and the quality … Eternity's understanding*:** The forms *qualitas* and *aeternitatis* are both emendations accepted in NF II, 341, 390, n. 285; cf. FR IV, 174, which also interprets the ambiguous *intellectus* ("understanding") as the Mind of Aion; above, note on "total consciousness."

***falsehood … geniture*:** See Puech (1952), p. 256, on the deceit of time; also, above, section 26, on "geniture."

***enlightening me*:** Above, section 23; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, p. 176.

***Tat … silence*:** The manuscripts have *tati;* NF II, 341; above, *C.H.* XIII. 22; for "divine mysteries," see *C.H.* I.16.

***Understanding differs from consciousness*:** Nock reads *intellectus a sensu*, but Festugière suggests the addition of *humanus* after the former and *mundano* ("the world's") after the latter; Scott thinks that *intellectus* may represent *dianoia* ("thinking" in *C.H.* 1.1) and that *sensu* is *nous*,

***concentrating the mind*:** For *mentis pervenit intentione*, NF II, 342, has "parvient seulement, à force d'application." See above, sections 1, 3, 6, 10, 11 and 19 for *intentio* as "concentration," "effort" or "intention."

***above the world*:** The Latin has only *super se*, but NF II, 391, n. 291, suggests that the Greek may have been *tous huper auton* [i.e., *ton kosmon] theous*, "the gods above the cosmos," who might be either the *ousiarchai*

of section 19 or, according to Scott III, 218, "hypostasized *dunameis* of God."

quite confined: Scott III, 219, finds *angustissima* difficult; NF II, 342, has "resserrée en des limites très étroites."

33 ***important topic:*** The void is also discussed in *C.H.* II.10–11; Scott III, 96–7, lists ancient authorities who debated the void and concludes that the point of view here is Stoic; see also above, section 10, on "theory"; NF II, 391, n. 292; Scott IVF, 408–9.

***detect them*:** NF II, 342, adopts Henri Estienne's emendation of *quas ... eas to quas ... res*.

***For just … nature and quality*:** This sentence, especially the parenthesis, has troubled several editors: in the phrase *si tarnen est aliquid (nec istud enim credo) sic habeo* ("if there is any such thing, I do not believe … as I take it"), W. Kroll and Ferguson put a lacuna after *credo* and conclude that the original Greek was something like *oude gar ⟨kenon einai⟩ ekeino pisteuō*, in which case the missing Latin would have included ⟨*inane esse*⟩ ("that it is void") or something similar, but these words do not fit the existing text in any obvious way; NF
11, 343, 391, n. 293; Scott III, 98, IVF, 408.

***they look like*:** NF II, 343, adds an *ut* at the head of this clause where other editors have inserted *cum* or *quae*.

***I am speaking … signs*:** Scott III, 267–9, IV, 230, moves the whole parenthesis to sections 28-9, above, and explains it by reference to demonological material in Lydus, *On Months* 4.25, 32. NF II, 343, 391, n. 294, emends *in terram* and similar manuscript readings to *inter ea*, thus supplying the second half of a pleonasm, *inter . . . inter* ("between the … and the").

***spirit and air*:** Above, *C.H.* I.5, 11.11; Scott III, 100; NF II, 391, n. 295.

34 ***about place*:** For "place" (*locus, topos*), see above, section 15; *C.H.* II. 3–6, 11–14; Scott III, 100; NF II, 392, n. 298.

***receptacle … of bodies*:** Nock's text is *receptaculum est omnium sensibilium specierum qualitatum vel corporum*, which Festugière renders "le réceptacle de toutes les qualités ou substances des formes sensibles," but Scott I, 326, transposes *vel* before *qualitatum*, which is the

basis of my translation. For *species* as form, see above, sections 2-5; *C.H.* VIII.3.

***god is everything*:** Above, section 2.

***to god alone*:** The Latin is *ipsi soli*, for which NF II, 344 has "lui seul"; Scott III, 124, explains that the world is fully sensible (*aisthētos*) and intelligible (*noētos*) only to God, and that both these aspects of the world are included in the "whole" (*totum*); cf. FR IV, 72–3.

***Without god through him*:** NF II, 392, nn. 303–4, compares this language to John 1:3 and Rom. 11:36 but suggests no dependence on these texts; cf. Norden, *Agnostos*, pp. 347–54.

***covered … by a garment*:** Festugière refers to *C.H.* X.2, where "the cosmos [is] in eternity (*aiōni*)," and XVI. 12, where "the intellectual cosmos … encompasses the sensible cosmos"; Scott cites Philo, *On Flight* 20.110 and *On Dreams* 1.35.203 for the notion of a garment; Ferguson refers to Hippolytus, *Refutation* 5.8 for "the heavenly garment wrapping this world." See NF II, 393, n. 305; Scott III, 124; IVF, 409; and for other uses of *enduma*, *chiton* and related terms: *C.H.* III.2, VII.2, X.13, 17–18.

35 ***Each kind*:** Above, sections 2-5, for *species*, *genus* and *forma*; in this section, "kind" represents *genus*, "form" is *forma* and "class" is *species*, for which NF II, 345, 393, n. 306, has "type idéal" from *paradeigma*; Scott III, 127–9.

⟨*or irrational*⟩: Following Goldbacher and others, NF II, 345, inserts *vel inrationalis*.

***as is … the non-bodily*:** Showing in his apparatus how the meaning is preserved, NF II, 345, retains *et quicquid* ("as is anything"), though Thomas had emended it to *ut quicquid*, but follows Thomas in correcting *forma* to *formae* ("forms") and W. Kroll in inserting *et* ("and") after *corpora* ("bodies").

***latitude … Omniform*:** The word "latitude" represents *elimatum* (*klimata*), a technical term in astrology. If the horoscope gives the individual's fate, the *klima* shapes the fate of nations or peoples. With *klimata* are associated demons called *klimatarchai* (cf. *ousiarchai*, above, section 19) who rule the seven heavenly zones linked to the seven geographical regions; with horoscopes are associated the horoscopic or

Decan demons that rule the moment of birth, as in *C.H.* XVI.15. For *klimata*, see *S.H.* XXIV.11–15 and NF III, ccxxi, n. 1, IV, 61–2, n. 31; Scott IVF, 409–10, 467–9. See also NF II, 393, nn. 306- 7 and Scott III, 128–30, which show that the "turning circle" is the zodiac whose god, Omniform or *Pantomorphos* (section 19, above), produces the forms of lower beings through the thirty-six Decans, three residing in each zodiacal sign. FR I, 121, also sees the term "moments" (*momenta*) as a reference to the doctrine (also described in chapter 25 of the astrological *Liber Hermetis*; Gundel, *Texte*, pp. 50–72, 135–69) of *monomoirai*, stars ruling each degree of the 360 in the great circle so that no instant of time is without its god.

36 ***change its form*:** Here and in its next five occurrences, "form" represents *species*, for which Festugière uses "apparence," "aspect," "type" and "forme"; above, sections 2-5; NF II, 346; Scott III, 131.

***changing … form of heaven* :** The changes could be from climate to climate (above, section 35) or within the atmosphere of a particular climate: NF II, 393, n. 309; Scott IVF, 410.

stages or courses: Although he translates *stationes aut cursus* as "les temps d'arrêt ou de progrès dans la croissance," Festugière notes that these terms also have an astronomical meaning, referring to *stationes praefinitas cursumque* ("prescribed stations and … orbit") in section 13, above; NF II, 346, 393, n. 310; Scott III, 131, IV, 410.

like our mirrors: Festugière (NF II, 394, n. 312) thinks that the changing appearance of the sun and moon, not reflection, is the point of comparison here, but cf. Scott III, 131–2.

37 ***But now:*** Augustine includes all but the last sentence of this section in *City of God* 8.24, 26; above, sections 10, 23-4; NF II, 347, 394, nn. 313–14.

***divine nature … once*:** It may be that *natura* implies coming-to-be here: above, section 4; NF II, 397, n. 315. Scott III, 220, suggests that the first word in the phrase *quoniam ergo proavi* ("ancestors once") is "a mistranslation of *epei,"* but cf. *OLD* s.v. *quoniam*.

***To their … power in*:** Here and further on in this section, "matter" represents *mundus* and "material" is *mundanus*, on which see above, section 2. Nock's text is *cui inventae adiunxerunt virtutem de mundi*

natura convenientem eamque miscentes, *quoniam animas facere non poterant*, and Festugière gives "l'ayant trouvé, ils y attachèrent une vertu appropriée, qu'ils tiraient de la nature matérielle; et, mêlant cette vertu à la substance des statues, comme ils ne pouvaient créer proprement des âmes," referring to Ferguson's argument that *inventae* ("discovery") here cannot mean *artem* ("art") in the previous sentence but must refer to some power or material ingredient required for the art: NF II, 347, 394, n. 316; Scott III, 222, IVF, 426–7. See also *A.D.* 8.3; *NHC* VI.8.69.29–32; and Mahé, *Hermès* II, 98–102, 224, 315, 385, who puts the god-making described in sections 23-4 and 37-8 in the context both of theurgy and of Egyptian statues animated by the *Ba* of the god. In particular, Mahé notes the relevance of *PGM* V.370–445 (Betz, pp. 107–9); this spell seeks revelation by using a figure of Hermes fabricated as follows: "Take 28 leaves from a pithy laurel tree and some virgin earth and seed of wormwood and the herb calf's snout … pounded together with … the liquid of an ibis egg and made into a uniform dough and into a figure of Hermes wearing a mantle, while the moon is ascending in Aries or Leo… . Let Hermes be holding a herald's staff. And write the spell on hieratic papyrus or on a goose's windpipe … and insert it into the figure for inspiration." See especially, below, note on "quality" in section 38; also *PGM* IV. 1840–70, 2373–99, VII.862–9, XII.14–95 (Betz, pp. 71, 81–2, 141, 154); Nock (1929a), p. 187; Gundel, *Weltbild*, pp. 35–6; Grese (1988), pp. 48–9; Copenhaver (1988), pp. 84–9.

demons … ***mysteries:*** Cumont, *Lux*, p. 231, discusses texts in which angels and demons were not distinguished as good and evil; see also above, sections 19, 21, 25, 32; *C.H.* I.16.

ancestor … crocodiles: The word *avus* can mean "ancestor" in general or "grandfather" in particular, and it is likely that the disciple Asclepius is understood to be a grandson or descendant of the god Asclepius, just as the teacher Hermes is a grandson of the great Thoth (above, *C.H.* I.Title; II. 1; X.23). Scott believes that the "earthly" gods mentioned below are, like Asclepius or Imhotep, also deified humans. On these and other points in this passage, see: above, section 27; *C.H.* II.l; Scott III, 220–7; NF II, 394, n. 17; Mahé, *Hermès* II, 306.

***does he not … city*:** Where the manuscripts have won, NF II, 348 follows the selection in Augustine for the interrogative *nonne*; likewise for *patria*

("native city") rather than *patriam*. For the several places called Hermopolis, see above, section 27; Scott III, 228; NF II, 394, n. 321.

Isis … Osiris: These major Egyptian deities, enormously important in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds as well, appear nowhere else in the *Asclepius* and not at all in the Greek treatises, but Isis is named fourteen times in the fragments preserved by Stobaeus, Osiris nine times; on Hermes as father of Isis and other points, see especially *S.H.* XXIII-XXVI; NF II, 395, n. 322; Malaise (1982), pp. 52–3; Ries (1982), pp. 146–63; Griffiths, *De Iside*, p. 263; Hani, *Plutarque*, pp. 38–9; Grandjean, *Arétalogie*, pp. 17–21, 75.

***Anger … earthly and material*:** For "earthly and material" the Latin is *terrenis ... atque mundanis*; above, section 2. Scott III, 228–30, points out that earthly gods are irascible because they are vulnerable to *pathe* while the celestial gods are *apatheis*; above, *C.H.* VI.2, XII. 4–7, 10–11; Griffiths, *Isis-Book*, p. 152.

***called holy … while alive*:** For *haec sancta animalia nuncupari* Festugière has "reconnaissent officiellement ces animaux sacrés que nous voyons," explaining that these last three words represent *haec* and proposing "déclarent saints, comme nous le voyons, les animaux" as an alternative. By Scott's account, the object of worship in the Egyptian temple might be a statue or a live animal, the latter also regarded as an "earthly" god and inhabited by a divinized human soul. This interpretation makes sense of the rest of the sentence, which seems to fit humans better than animals, though it should be noted that a town (e.g. Crocodilopolis, above, section 27) might be named after an animal. Festugière, criticizing Scott's translation, explains that an animal treated as divine while alive was absorbed into the god when dead; thus, the living god Apis became Osiris-Apis or Osorapis or Sarapis after death. Seen in this light, Festugière's translation of *colique ... eorum animas*, *quorum sunt consecratae viventes* as "adorent … les âmes de ceux dont les âmes ont été déifiées de leur vivant" is cumbersome but precise. See: NF II, 348, 395–6, nn. 323–4; Scott III, 230–4, IVF, 428; Fraser, *Alexandria*, I, p. 503.

***constantly assail*:** On disagreement over sacred animals as a cause of physical hostilities, see Juvenal, *Satire* 15.1–13, 33–44, which describes a conflict between Tentyra (Dendera) and Ombi, which may have started when the people of Tentyra ate the crocodile held sacred by the citizens of

Ombi; Courtney, *Juvenal*, pp. 590–9; Griffiths, *De Iside*, pp. 548–9; cf. Scott III, 234–5.

38 ***And the quality … of divinity*:** NF II, 348–9, 396, nn. 325–6, renders *qualitas* as "propriété," meaning "a magical power." The last word in the phrase *divinitatis naturalem vim* ("natural power of divinity") is missing in all but one group of manuscripts, where it comes before *divinitatis*; Festugière points out that the equivalent Greek phrase is *theiotētos phusikēn dunamin*, where the adjective *phusikos/naturalis* would mean "occult," as in his translation – "une vertu occulte d'efficacité divine." Scott III, 244–5, IV, 40–42, cites Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 5.23.233–4 (cf. Augustine, *City of God* 10.11) for his account of "the art of theurgy … [that] often twines together stones, plants, animals, spices and other such things which are sacred and perfect (*teleia*) and of divine form to make all of them into a complete and pure receptacle. For one need not have qualms about all matter, only that alien to the gods, selecting what is suitable to them and conformable to … consecrations of statues." See above, sections 23-4, 37; Lewy, *Oracles*, p. 230.

communication with heaven: Nock obelizes *caelestius*, the third appearance of a form of *caelestis* ("heavenly") within a group of ten words, but Festugière prefers the scribal correction *caelesti usu* which, in combination with *et frequentatione*, he translates as "la pratique répétée des rites célestes"; NF II, 349, 396, n. 328.

***the order assigned*:** For *ordinem* ("order") Festugière has *rang*; above, sections 19 and 23 for *seira* and *taxis*.

***individually*:** NF II, 397, n. 330, refers to the doctrine of universal and particular gods (*holikoi*, *merikoi*) deriving from *Timaeus* 40–2 and the Neoplatonic commentators; below, section 39.

39 ***Heimarmenē or the Fates*:** Here and below, the Greek word is an editorial construction; NF II, 349. Scott III, 246, identifies the ousiarch *Heimarmenē* of section 19 as a personal being, while in this passage he sees an abstraction constructed along Stoic lines; see also *C.H.* I.9, XI.5, XII.6; Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 365–70; Moreschini, *Studi*, pp. 95–8.

***heavenly … earthly*:** See above, section 38, for universal and particular gods in the *Timaeus*; NF II, 397, n. 322, explains that *incolunt*, which corresponds to "belong to" in my translation, must represent *dioikousi*

("govern"), but it would be hard for a Greekless Latin reader to recognize this.

***She is the maker … second god*:** A Greek version of what follows on fate, necessity and order appears in Lydus, *On Months* 4.7; above, note on Title; NF II, 350; Scott II, 248–53, IV, 230. See below, section 41 for "the supreme and most high god."

***ordering of all*:** As above in section 32, "ordering" renders *disciplina*, which represents *taxis* in the text of Lydus; NF II, 397, n. 334.

***Necessity … Order*:** Ferguson interprets this material as "a piece of *Timaeus* exegesis," especially in light of the commentary of Chalcidius; above, n. 38, on "individuality." Scott maintains that *necessitas* and *ordo* correspond to *anankē* and *taxis*, which join *heimarmenē* in a triad whose mythological counterpart is the three Moirai: Lachesis, Klotho and Atropos. Thus, the author of the *Asclepius* sees *heimarmenē* as Lachesis, whose work of "begetting the sources" governs the past; *taxis/ordo* is Klotho, whose responsibility for "structure and temporal arrangement" covers the present; and *anankē/necessitas* is Atropos, by whom things are "forced into activity" in the future: Scott III, 251–3, IVF, xix-xxvi; NF II, 397–8, nn. 335–6. For the different arrangement presented by pseudo-Plutarch, *On Fate* 2 (568E), which assigns Klotho, Atropos and Lachesis to the highest, middle and lowest regions of the cosmos, see Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, pp. 320–2, 356; see also above, *C.H.* IV.8.

***the world's order*:** Above, section 2, and NF II, 398, n. 336a, on *mundus* and *kosmos* as orderly arrangements.

40 ***These three*:** Above, section 39.

***disturbed … kindness*:** This contrasts with the irascibility of the terrestrial gods in section 37, above; Scott III, 254.

***eternal … eternity itself*:** For eternity or *aiōn*, see above, section 30; Scott III, 185–91.

***time and again*:** NF II, 351, 398, n. 338, has "à tour de rôle," taking *alternis* as equivalent to *alternis vicibus*; above, section 31.

***assuming that*:** NF II, 351, adopts Thomas's correction of *sit quod sit* to *si quod sit*.

***material … world*:** NF II, 351, 398, n. 340, has "tout ce qui vient de la matière" for *omnibus ... mundanis*, explaining that "*mundanus* is

precisely equivalent in meaning to *hulikos* here"; above, section 2; Scott III, 255.

41 ***praying … east*:** For another prayer with directions for orientation, see above, *C.H.* XIII. 16; NF II, 389, nn. 341–2, cites several other examples, including *PGM* V.422 (Betz, p. 109); FR IV, 244–5; cf. Scott III, 280; Braun, *Jean*, pp. 262–3.

***frankincense and spices*:** NF II, 352, has "d'encens et de parfums" for *ture ... et pigmentis;* Scott III, 281, explains that *pigmentum* is "a scented unguent" and that at sunset the Egyptians burnt a mixture of sixteen substances called *kuphi*; cf. FR I, p. 83; Waddell, *Manetho*, pp. 203–5.

***bad omen* :** On the reasonable assumption that the Greek underlying *melius ominare* was some form of *euphēmeō*, as in *C.H.* I.22, 11.10, XIII. 8, and elsewhere, Festugière has the imperative "silence." Lactantius, *Institutes* 6.25.11 (Scott IV, 22; NF II, 352) reproduces Trismegistus' rebuke to Asclepius and ascribes it to the *Sermo perfectus*; above, note on title.

***worship … thanks*:** According to Scott (III, 282–4; NF II, 399, nn. 343–4), who cites parallels from Porphyry, Apollonius of Tyana and others, the worship preferred here to material sacrifice is like the "pure speech offerings" of the Greek treatises (*C.H.* I.31; XIII. 17–21). Van Moorsel, *Mysteries*, pp. 38–40, sees this as a desire for "radical spiritualization" and "radical rejection of sacrifice," citing *C.H.* 11.16, V. 10, VI.l and XII.23; see also IV.7.

***We thank … your knowledge*:** For the reference of *tantum* ("alone"), see FR IV, 58, n. 2; cf. NF II, 353; Parrott, *NHC* VI, p. 379. Reitzenstein discovered that Papyrus Mimaut, one of the Greek Magical Papyri, contains a prayer to the sun whose last part (*PGM* III.591–609 [Betz, pp. 33–4]) corresponds to the Latin prayer in this section; Scott compares the Greek line for line with the Latin. The same prayer also occurs in *NHC* VI.7.63.33–65.7, edited by Mahé, *Hermès* I, 160–7, and by Dirkse and Brashler in Parrot, *NHC* VI, pp. 378–87. Referring to the "ritual embrace … and … cultic meal" at the end of the prayer (*NHC* VI.7.65.3–7; cf. 6.57.26–7), Dirkse and Brashler conclude that "the primary *Sitz im Leben* for [the prayer] … was a Hermetic gnostic community dedicated to the preservation and transmission of the knowledge celebrated in [it]." Noting that the *Asclepius* omits the actual spells in *PGM* III.494–591 that precede

the prayer, Grese (1988), pp. 51–5, argues that the survival of a thanksgiving for *gnōsis* in "a magician's handbook testifies to a certain amount of sharing between Hermeticism and the magicians who produced the Greek Magical Papyri." The Greek corresponding to *nomen sanctum* ("holy name") is *aphraston onoma* ("unutterable name"), and the cult of *Iupiter Exsuperantissimus* ("most high"; cf. Greek *hupsistos*) was promoted from the time of Commodus (176–92 CE) onward. Gersh, *Platonism*, I, pp. 343–4, connects *exsuperantissimus* and other terms in the Corpus with the language of transcendence in Apuleius. The note on "glorified" in section 23, above, is relevant for "the light of your knowledge." See: above, section 39; Reitzenstein, *HMR*, pp. 364–8; *Poimandres*, pp. 146–54; Bousset (1914), pp. 109–12; Scott III, 284- 300; NF II, 353–4; FR IV, 63; Festugière, *Religion*, p. 125; Mahé, *Hermès* I, 137–67; Nock (1929a), pp. 190–2; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 177–8; Grese, *Early Christian*, pp. 183–8; cf. *C.H.* I.31–2; XIII. 18–20; Moreschini, *Studi*, pp. 99–105; Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 10.8.293–4.

***fidelity … indeed rejoice*:** *Pietatem et religionem et amorem* ("fidelity, reverence and love") represent *eunoian kai storgēn kai philian* ("kindness, affection and love"), while *sensu*, *ratione*, *intellegentia* ("consciousness, reason and understanding") stand for *noun logon gnōsin*. Festugière, who regularly uses "*intellect*" for *sensus* ("faute d'un vocable mieux approprié"), points out that *cognoverimus* ("we may know") and *cognoscentes* ("knowing") actually correspond to two different verbs, *noeō* and *epigignōskō*, the former translated as "think" or "understand" in the Greek treatises, the latter as "discern" or "come to know": NF II, 353, 399, n. 349; FR IV, 58; and for related problems, above, section 3, and *C.H.* I.1. Scott III, 289–90, finds *suspicionibus* ("dim suppositions") "hard to account for" since the Greek is *logon de hina epikalesōmen* ("reason, so that we might call upon"). Mahé, *Hermes* I, 163, reads *hoc lumine* for *ac numine* ("And … by … power") and punctuates the passage differently.

***make us … depend on the body*:** For *consecrare* Festugière has "consacrer," noting that while Nock prefers "faire passer du profane au sacré," the Greek *apetheōsas* would seem to justify "déifier," for which see above, sections 6, 22, 29; *C.H.* I.26; IV.7; X.5–7, 24–5; XI. 20; XII.l, 12; XIII.1, 3, 10, 14, 22; NF II, 354, 400, n. 353; and Scott III, 294, especially for the disagreement over mankind's ability to be divinized

while still in the body. Mahé, *Hermès* I, 153, follows Festugière's rendering and argues that the less explicit *consecrare* reflects the diffidence of the Latin translator about apotheosis.

***known you … reason*:** Mahé, *Hermès* I, 165, reads the vocative *o lumen* ("light") for *et lumen* ; NF II, 355, adopts Reitzenstein's emendation of *sensibili* to *sensibile* ("perceived"), which makes it agree with *lumen*; cf. Scott I, 376, III, 294; Klein, *Lichtterminologie*, pp. 178–9.

***womb pregnant*:** The Greek corresponding to *fecunda praegnatio* is *mētra kuēphore*, which Festugière associates with similar ideas in *C.H.* I.9, 12; V.9; NF II, 400–1, nn. 355–6.

***persist … fullness*:** The adjective *plenissimae* ("perfect fullness") in agreement with *naturae* ("coming-to-be") is Reitzenstein's emendation, adopted in NF II, 355, of *plenissimu* and similar manuscript readings; after this word Reitzenstein excised a second appearance of *cognovimus te* ("we have known you") in this third part of the triad. But Mahé reads *plenissime*, the vocative, and keeps the second *cognovimus te*$_f$ inserting *patris generantis* after it and thus producing a tetrad instead – the last two members being "we have known you in conceiving all of nature, you who are most full; we have known you, the eternal duration of the father who begets"; *Hermès* I, 165; Mahé (1974a), p. 153.

***pure meal … thing*:** NF II, 401, n. 399, cites Porphyry's *On Abstinence* for similar ritual prohibitions; e.g., *On Abstinence* 2.11, 60; 4.7.

Indexes

Although the three indices that follow are extensive, they are by no means comprehensive. As a rule, Greek and Latin words are listed (in dictionary form) only if they appear in the introduction, the translated text or the notes. Most words that appear in boldface as headings for the notes are listed, regardless of significance. Because words from the translated text are indexed as English words, they form different groupings than the Greek or the Latin would produce. Cross-references suggest important connections among some groups of words.

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